Frederic Mansel Reynolds

THE PARRICIDE.

A DOMESTIC ROMANCE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MISERRIMUS."

"Homo homini lupus.'
ERASMUS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE PARRICIDE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

In the hope of benefiting some few of my fellow men, and of thereby making a slight atonement for my crimes, I record the events of a long life of self-indulgence, anarchy, passion, and truculence, of which every minute has been a tempest, and every thought a wound. *Now*, the ashes of my heart are entombed in my breast, as in a sepulchre of ice; yet once, that heart was formed of fire, and burnt, and raged until it perished, self-consumed.

But, I remember that, in the days when I formed a portion of the world, there existed a sect, who denied the utility of the exposition of moral deformity. Perhaps, in a few instances, the doctrine of these timid philosophers may not be wholly wrong; still, I cannot think that it is generally right. There may be some natures, so utterly depraved, weak, and servile, that, the mere perusal of a crime, however much it may be reprobated by the narrator, and avenged upon the perpetrator, shall yet awaken in them a desire to imitate

it. But, guilty and defective as are all the shadows of this fleeting and mortal pageant, few are they who possess this extent of folly and vice. It may almost be considered a canon that the majority of men will ever be intimidated, and improved by an accurate picture of the awful retribution, which the unbridled indulgence of the passions never fails to inflict upon the self-abandoned.

We are all of us prone to refer to the actions of the ancients, for admiration, and for precedent; but, the opponents of the belief I entertain in the sincerity, and contrition of my heart, have forgotten, or disregarded, one of the most striking examples they have bequeathed to us. The strong disposition to portray the most powerful emotions, and the darkest atrocities, formed a principal feature in their character. *Love*, subsequently, so common a theme, among the nations of the West, rarely constituted any portion of the means of interest and excitement, which the authors of the classic era adopted. *Terror*, terror, in its most powerful and hideous forms, was their principal, and almost, their sole agent; for, *compassion*, the other affection to which their compositions were addressed, was usually but its consequence: they first caused their audience to tremble; and then, to pity.

This, is the form which the dramatic productions of the ancients generally assumed; but, if we turn from them, to their traditionary history, equally terrible scenes are presented to us. Eteocles and Polynices, Atreus, and Thyestes; Œdipus, Laius, Jocasta; Mezentius and Procrustes, are charmed names, the very sight or sound of which, almost create a thrill of fear.

Yet, the Athenians, instead of being indurated by these gloomy objects of their fond consideration, were not only a wise and great, but, a singularly *humane* people. Why then, should we deem themes of terror and retribution, calculated to produce an injurious impression upon the youthful and the ductile? for I cannot believe, that any will suppose that the *mature* are likely to be perniciously influenced by them. Generally, but too disposed to imitate the past, why should we reject its example, in this striking particular alone?

Little, however, need I seek to justify my motives! Above, and below, both calumny, and malignity, too reckless to regard them, and too lost to be harmed by them, without fear, and without scathe, I might now indulge my own inclinations, even were they most flagitious. Let, therefore, my adversary persist in his condemnation of my creed; little need I now heed whether his censures arise in the strength of his virulence, or, in the weakness of his comprehension, whether they be fictitious or sincere. I shall still believe that, as the study, and improvement of our physical being are advanced by a dissemination of the knowledge of its most rare, and remarkable diseases, so, an accurate record of the morbid phases, and delusions of a mind singularly and eminently disordered, must ever be instructive and serviceable, to all who have sufficient intelligence, and benevolence to seek to penetrate the obscurity of that sad and solemn mystery, the human heart; and to avail themselves of every gleam of discovery, in promoting the general elevation, dignity, and welfare of their kind.

Yes; I am myself alone: no sorrow is equal to my

sorrow, no guilt is equal to my guilt. I can divulge to the ear of man, a tissue of thoughts and deeds, that will impress, and intimidate the most insensible; thoughts of such startling rarity, that even the moment of their disclosure, shall be to him as an epoch in his subsequent life. Come then, to my banquet, ye, who hesitating between virtue, and vice, require some sudden, and powerful incentive, some fearful and awful example of divine retribution, to determine you to a choice; ye, hardened criminals, who have so long indulged, in impunity, all the wayward, selfish impulses of your hearts, that, ye believe yourselves exempt from all liability to punishment, and consequently, require to be taught the fate that is ultimately, and inevitably, adjudged to you, unless ye speedily abandon, in sincerity, and contrition, in spirit, as well as in deed, the evil of your ways: ye, too, negative beings, who hang, like Mahomet's coffin, between earth and heaven, yet possess neither the vices of the one, nor the virtues of the other, attend, and ye, shall learn that heaven requires *action* at your hands; and ye, moral ghouls who love to haunt the dark, and awful sepulchres of the mind, and feast on its remains, come hither! and I will gorge you on rottenness, and corruption.

Come one; come all. Not a sinner but shall receive a lesson, not an honest man but shall meet a confirmation of his faith. I think I see above me, an obscure, mysterious, endless roof of sublimely lofty, and stupendous arches, beneath which a nation might assemble; from column to column, are suspended the habiliments of the grave; and along the dank, and discoloured floor, extend a triple interminable line of

black, colossal, visionary tables, that gradually melt from the eye, until finally lost in the gray, and heavy vapours of the distance. Take then, your seats, my bidden guests, at this ample, and hospitable board: and now, like another Timon, *I* will uncover, and *you* shall lap: in the plenitude of my sorrow, and my bitterness, of my remorse for the past, and apprehension of the future, I could supply a repast for all the nations of the earth!

Before, however, I commence the narrative of the incidents of my life, I must devote some prefatory thoughts to the consideration of the characters of both my sire and myself, and of those pursuits, occupations, and circumstances, which, I believe, to have been most influential in promoting, and fostering the worst features of my unhappy nature.

My father, and in that one word is comprised for me, every horror which the human mind can endure, was one of those characters that cannot be entirely portrayed. It were comparatively easy to say that which he was not; but impossible to express that which he was. He was not violent; he seemed, too, neither fierce, nor cruel; nor a profligate, nor a gamester, nor a drunkard; he was not oppressive to his dependants, or a grasping, avaricious landholder, though it was asserted that he did not spend a tithe of his large revenue; he was not generous, he was not high-minded; he was not affectionate; he was not benevolent, charitable, compassionate, or devout. In brief, he had apparently neither positive virtue, nor positive vice: and I know but two epithets that will convey any accurate

idea of his real character; he was eminently *selfish*, and *insensible*.

Yet, such as he was, I can remember the time when I loved him fondly. I never recur to these affections of my childhood, and early youth, but with an anguish inconceivable; for the retrospection makes me conscious that I was born with the seeds of good within me. What then, was the cause of their extirpation, and of the entire predominance of their antagonistic principles? A *parent's neglect*, and my own *morbid sensibility*, and *intense egotism*. In this answer, is contained the moral of my life of sorrow, desolation, and atrocity.

The one quality caused me to feel with a torturing acuteness every contrariety; the other, deprived me of the power of impartially investigating the nature of my wrongs. Every word, every look, every gesture that would admit the possibility of misinterpretation, infused anguish, and bitterness into my soul. And each of these wounds, of which the causes were, frequently, either ideal, or trivial, was indelible. But, the agony which an intentional gibe, or contumely, occasioned me, is ineffable! Even, after a lapse of years, I could not mentally recur to the hour of its infliction, without a shudder of sympathy, and that sickness of the heart, and momentary prostration of the physical being, which the morbidly sensitive can alone experience, or understand. But while the pang of the first impression was on me, in its full recency, and strength, it haunted me with an irresistible power, by night, and by day; even in my very sleep, I possessed a gloomy, and confused consciousness of

being under the influence of some all-absorbing calamity; and, when I awoke, it was but to find my too active, and tenacious mind spring like a beast of prey upon its fatally attractive theme, and pertinaciously review, and reconsider it, under all the forms, and aspects, it had already endlessly presented.

Thus darkly, and doggedly used I to brood over my injuries, whether real or fancied. Never did it enter into my imagination, to endeavour to place myself in the situation of my adversary, and attempt to ascertain whether I might not have provoked the wrong I had sustained. That golden precept, which may almost be said to comprise the entire code of morality, *Do, as you would be done by*, never even obtained a thought from me: I had seen, and read the words, but they conveyed to my brain no intelligible image; they were sounds, but the sense they should have represented, was not perceptible to one whose every thought was addressed to *self*.

Yes; I lived in a world the circumference of which was described by the bones of my own frame; within its narrow limits was my mind immutably concentrated, and without it, it never wandered. Yet, how many of the self-satisfied of this world, pseudo moralists, and philanthropists, are in this predicament! Frequenters of churches, scrupulous observers of religious ordinations, fastidious respecters of social regulations, and prejudices, they do not suspect that they may be indulging a merely selfish impulse; that timidity may *not* be devotion; and that a fear of the world's reproof, and a craving for its approbation, may exist in the breast which does *not* love its neigh-

bour as well as itself. May this intimation arouse them to a self-misgiving, and instigate them to that search within their hearts, which can alone inform them, whether they really possess the righteousness they so pharisaically claim!

Even while I am addressing this admonition to others, the elements of strife are at work within me. Oromazes!—Arimanius!—Principles of good and evil! Gods of my aversion, and idolatry, of my aspirations, and desertion! Alternate creatures, and rulers of my destiny! why do you thus fatally oppress the unfortunate, who, whether the Lord, or slave, of one, is equally certain to be the victim of the unmitigable rancour of both? Why have ye selected this sorry, fragile frame for the constant arena of your deadliest combats? Why, at least, maintained them with a strictly equal, advantage? Wherefore, dull and impotent that ye are, has not your mutual, and immortal wrath taught one of ye the skill to subjugate the other? Would that it had! Oh! would that it had, I repeat, in the bitterness and desperation of my heart! would that I had been the *entire* prey of *either;* that I had been all good, or all evil, and I should never have been the wretch I am! —Jangling, discordant, demoniac powers! Curses of my being! destroyers of my future! even now, your loathsome thraldom is upon me! and after a long life of crime, remorse, and terrible experience of the rewards you accord your votaries, I feel, at this instant, as much torn, and tortured by your intestine feuds, as much divided by the love of wrong, and right, as, when first your fell dominion excited me to madness, and then, to murder! God have mercy on me! Steer

own bark, I cannot; without one dependable principle of resistance within me, I am the sport of every breeze; and, as it pleases fate to waft me, I shall either be wrecked, or saved!

But, I will strive to repress these ebullitions of despondency, and despair. They were awakened in me, by a sudden, and bitter confirmation of my knowledge of the imperishable perversity of my nature; for, I felt that, even in the very moment, I was writing the lines inculcating to others, the practice of virtue, I myself was entertaining a fierce, and headlong impulse to wrong. But, the fitful phrensy has passed; my mind has emancipated itself from the dominion of darkness; and I will endeavour to pursue my theme, in the spirit in which I commenced it.

It is possible that the situation of our abode, the abode itself, and the utter seclusion of the early portion of my existence, may have had no small influence in the formation of my peculiar character. We lived among the wildest, and most desolate scenes; mountain piled upon mountain, waste following waste in endless succession; stunted trees, grotesque rocks, precipice, chasm, fissure, gorge, and defile. Here, and there, were scattered a few fertile scenes; spots of pasture land in a vast desert; but, the general features of the country, were sternness, and sterility.

The mansion itself was congenial to the locality: possessed of the mingled character of fortress, and domestic residence, large, straggling, and incommodious; divided, too, into numerous narrow, and gloomy apartments, and passages, it was eminently calculated to impress, though unconsciously, a mind naturally both

sensitive, and melancholy. I remember the time, even before I was acquainted with the influence of sympathies, and associations, or the power of self-investigation had developed itself within me; that, when the storm raged without, and the wind howled discordantly, and mournfully through the long corridors, I was dimly aware that a weight was upon my spirit, and would stealthily retire to some unfrequented corner, to hide, and indulge my depression in darkness, and solitude.

Through all periods of my life, except in moments of entirely absorbing excitement, this subserviency to the power of sound has remained to me. Perchance, my sister's skill in playing upon the organ may have had no unimportant share in perpetuating, and strengthening the morbid sensitiveness of my character, and my natural disposition to the indulgence of violent emotions. Often, have I listened to her performance of some plaintive, and holy melody, until the tears have chased each other in quick succession down my face; but, when suddenly exerting the whole power of the vast instrument, its sweetness was converted into fury, and its stupendous harmony gradually aggrandized, until it seemed, in the might and majesty of its wrath, to roar with the roar of a troop of famishing lions,—while the old timbers, and walls of our gloomy abode trembled beneath and around me in sympathetic fear,—I felt exalted, maddened; the thrilling skin appeared to forsake my body, and every separate hair, to stand, like wire, electrically erect on my head.

And often, since those days, have I lived to experience, that harmony may exist in such extent, and per-

fection, may rush upon the fluttering soul, in such a flood of power, that, jarred and shaken by tumultuous pleasure, overwhelmed and enervated by the excess of its enthusiasm, it shall strive painfully, but vainly, to hide itself in its deepest lair, as though it were seeking refuge from the pursuit of the wildest and most savage dissonance.

In addition to the negative qualities which I have assigned to my parent, I must enumerate one or two, of nearly a similar character. He was shy, reserved, gloomy, and moody. In him was no principle of gregariousness. Like myself, an only son, the sole heir, too, of great wealth, and rank, he had been what, alas, I never was, the idol of his parents. In youth, that critical age, which leaves, despite the most strenuous exertions of our will, its impress on all our subsequent life, he had never been thrown upon the world to carve his own path through it; to learn the habit of mingling without effort in the crowd; the necessity of occasional self-sacrifice, of sometimes deferring one's own wish to that of another; and of encouraging feelings of suavity and forbearance, were it only to avoid the discontent and suffering, which uncharitableness is sure to entail upon its possessor.

I have been depicting my father's character according to the notion I entertained of it, in my early years; how much is accurate, and how much erroneous, the sequel of my story will exhibit.

But partly, in consequence, I suppose, of the shade which had arisen in the impolicy of his education, and partly, perhaps, in the natural bent of his character, he ever led a life of solitude so strict, that it might al-

most be termed morose. He possessed but one solitary pursuit; and that one seemed directly opposed to the general tenour of his disposition, for it implied the existence of delicacy, and refinement. But it was, probably, one of those adopted caprices, which the mind contracts in very vacancy, and in that servile spirit of imitation, which the want of an original impulse engenders, and assiduously cultivates and cherishes until the habit of indulgence renders it as strong, and probably more permanent than, a spontaneous and natural passion. But, whatever was the cause, its existence seemed an anomaly in a character so insensible as that, of my father.

I refer to his love of collecting the finest works of art, both in painting and in sculpture; besides various physiological curiosities. His house was one vast magazine of the most remarkable productions of nature, and of man. In this room, might be seen a splendid marble copy of the Venus Callipyges in immediate contact with a stuffed alligator; or, with a boa constrictor in mortal combat with a tiger, whose despairing struggles, crushed frame, and dilated, and bloodshot eyes, were delineated with a painful and almost appalling accuracy. In the next apartment, perhaps, was a figure of Christ on his cross, perfectly carved out of the section of a barley-corn, standing by the side of a colossal head of Osiris, or Cybele; while around were scattered in chaotic confusion, the bones of the mammoth, imperfect skeletons of nameless animals, rare fossils, and various other antediluvian remains mingled with the softest, the most gracious, and most

beautiful specimens of the purest times of Grecian sculpture. The walls, too, were covered with the finest productions of the early Italian school; and on the tables beneath, lay numerous glittering fragments of quartz and iron, native gold, malachite, jasper, porphyry, agate, and all the richest and rarest ores, and spars, interspersed with many a hideous and ghastly monstrosity preserved with a degree of skill, that the timid spectator found, probably, less admirable, than deplorable.

I recur thus minutely to this particular occupation, and passion of my father, in my consciousness of the great influence it exerted over both our characters. It cannot but be supposed that, in a boy of a meditative, and sombre cast of mind, the constant presence of so many remarkable objects, of such incentives to serious reflection, in an abode so gloomy and deserted as ours, must have produced a powerful effect of some kind. Morning, noon, and night, day after day, I was in hourly contact with them; yet, such was the peculiar nature of my ever restless, self-tormenting disposition, that habit never familiarized me to them, or diminished in the smallest degree, the impressiveness of our communion; for, to *commune* with them, was in the literal sense of the term, my custom. Whenever my mind was in a congenial mood, and felt a craving for their excitement, I used to repair to the apartments that contained them; and there, among the most perfect realizations of immortal beauty, the vestiges of the ruins of empires, and of ages, the imperfect, and discoloured skeletons of my own race of ancient times and of distant lands, and the bones of the antediluvian dead,

I abandoned myself even in my earliest years, to a melancholy, but seducing train of passionate thought. Oh what a fund of feeling was then within me, to be directed to either good, or evil! I came into the world a plastic creature, and an affectionate instructer might without effort, have moulded me into any form. As the twig is bent, so groweth the tree. Never shall I be persuaded that there is not a period, when every nature is ductile; the cub of the lion may be tamed, and the heart of the veriest son of Anak that ever was born, may be subjugated in its youth: but, suffer that period to escape, neglect the all precious moment, selfish, insensible, or thoughtless parent! and your offspring becomes for the remainder of his days, a steed without a bridle, as utterly incapable of his own control, as intractable, and rebellious to that of others. If, then, the *adult* do not fulfil *his* duty, to the authors of his being, look ye, narrowly, within your own hearts, whether ye fulfilled *yours*, to the *child*.

Among the large mass of objects which my father had assembled, all of which, or at least, the great majority of which, possessed attractions for the studious and the observant, there were two, that peculiarly monopolized my consideration, and excited my feelings. One of these, was a representation of Medusa; the other, that, of Cupid and Psyche.

The first was a picture copied from the famous gem in the Strozzi collection at Rome. Words can give no idea of its peculiar excellence. How any human power could ever have succeeded in so perfectly subjugating to visible and palpable form, the spirit of the sublimely beautiful, and terrible, was, and is, my won-

der, and admiration! But what the modern mind in its most daring and visionary mood, could never even have *imagined*, the vigorous intellect, and skilful hand, of the past, have proudly seized and conquered, and triumphantly invested with an immortal being.

It is impossible to *say* all that the countenance of this remarkable picture expresses, it contains so extraordinary a union of physical perfection, and moral deformity. The features are superhumanly beautiful, and a general air of stilness pervades them; but, it is the stilness of the evil dead. All the more stormy passions seem to have been entombed on the faultless, and frigid brow; but grandeur, desolation, scorn, and calm, concentrated, unmitigable ferocity, are fearfully depicted in every lineament. Yet, the face possesses materially, more than the softness, and smoothness of the most fair, and the most young, though there is not a portion of it, but beams with a sentiment truly infernal. The hair is long and flowing, and thickly interspersed with raging serpents, the energy of whose action contrasts most forcibly with the stern tranquillity of the countenance they surround. Alike unearthly in its loveliness, and its terror, sublimely mysterious in its nature, it seems as though the blast of hell had breathed only on its *mind;* and we gaze with a thrilling and spell-bound interest, yet scarcely know whether on the living, or the dead. But, again I feel that no words can adequately describe this startling personification of the apparently impracticable union of immortal majesty, and beauty, with all that is dark, deadly, and atrocious.

In a second picture, which, also, was a copy from an ancient jasper, Medusa was exhibited under a different aspect; and her features, and eyes were convulsed by demoniac animosity. This design is distinguished by the epithet, *Terrible;* and was evidently executed in the express purpose of inspiring the affection from which it has received its denomination. But with me, it did not succeed in fulfilling its intention; it was too animated, too replete with passion, too human; it wanted the calm, death-like, supernatural malignity of the other.

By the side of, and in strong contrast to, the celebrated, and exquisitely graceful and passionate statue of Cupid caressing Psyche was the other object of my gloomy admiration. It was an ancient chalcedonyx; and beautifully, and terribly represented Cupid *tormenting* Psyche. His unhappy mistress is on her knees; she appears to be uttering the most heart-rending cries; her arms are tossed into the air; and her countenance expresses the extremity of anguish. Behind her, stands her fell oppressor; his brows are savagely knit; rancour and cruelty are sparkling in his eyes; and the rotundity and pulpousness of earliest youth, seem for ever to have departed from his body, the muscles of which are fiercely and prominently dilated. One of his feet rests on the back of her limbs, so that she is pinioned by the force of his weight to the earth; with his right hand, he is tearing the hair from her head; while with his left, he waves a torch, as though he were meditating the consummation of his cruelty, by firing her person.

It is impossible to describe the strange, inexplicable, and thrilling feelings with which I was wont to gaze upon these two remarkable subjects. The Medusa inspired me with a mingled sensation of poetic terror and admiration. It horrified me; but, in its horror, there was a fascination. I trembled; yet, pertinaciously clung to, and derived a wild tumultuous pleasure from, the indulgence of my wilfully entertained, and cherished fears. There was something so magnificent, so elevated, so vast, so opposed to all that is little, and human, in the gigantic moral devastation before me, that I could not but regard it with a species of unholy reverence. I was dazzled and astounded by its brilliancy, and its glory; and, in the mere proneness of poor mortal infirmity to admire, and to bow before the superb, and the dominating, almost became its votary.

In the weakness and delusion of my heart, I never tired of attempting to define to myself, the exact nature of the feelings of a being endowed with such an aspect. Were they to be dreaded or envied, admired, or contemned? Was their possessor above, or below, the retribution that awaits the common sinner; too callous, or too powerful? Could any mortal man, even if rich to an unprecedented degree, in bodily and mental gifts, ever attain to such a towering height of vicious grandeur, such a god-like perfection of fiendish atrocity?

From the Cupid caressing Psyche, to the Cupid *tormenting* her, my eyes used ceaselessly to wander with an insatiate interest; I never tired of contrasting the

amorous playfulness, affection, and grace of the one, with the truculence, and barbarity of the other. And then, I asked myself, "Is this representation founded in nature, and in truth, or is it the false conception of a solitarily perverse imagination? Is it possible that the same being can derive gratification from the indulgence of two such opposite sentiments? Love has its charm, all admit; but can the practice of cruelty be productive of pleasure?

The tenour of these thoughts implies but too plainly the bias of my disposition. All egotists are, and must be, cruel. They may not invariably, covet the commission of active barbarity, of positive corporeal inflictions, but their habitual disregard of the feelings, and desires of others, is a perpetual though a negative cruelty; and insensibly hardens the heart until it becomes eternally incapable of entertaining one sentiment of sympathy.

Many indeed, are the breasts that *unconsciously* contain a love of the terrible, and the sanguinary, the dark, and the atrocious. Who has not experienced a secret pleasure in seeing in the eyes of beauty, the tears which he has himself occasioned? Who *has* not, is unacquainted with an emotion which at once exalts him above his own nature, and sinks him to that, of a fiend; which is at once, sublime, and degrading, godlike and infernal.

Thousands, millions, exist, I know, who would deny with real, or affected indignation, all sympathy in such a sentiment; they will protest, perhaps believe, that they would not wilfully harm an insect. But, I will

reply to them, Read the history of the past, if you are so morally blind that you cannot derive conviction from a self-examination. Search these records; and and observe the infinite rarity of the individuals who, being possessed of that despotic station which alike secures for them indulgence and impunity, have escaped the dominion of those sanguinary principles which in a greater or less degree, are innate in every breast. Search these records; and you will learn that, *Death to the weak!* has ever been the battle-cry of the strong.

The vast majority of the men whose acts have been sufficiently important to command the dangerous distinction of being doomed to immortality by the indelible page of History, have been but lovers of carnage, the butchers of their race. Their first essays in blood may have risen in a selfish ambition; but, this, has but briefly continued their sole incentive: for, of all vices, cruelty is that which possesses the greatest charm for, and most frequently exerts an exclusive influence over, the lost being who has abandoned himself to its sway. The man that slays his foe, to protect, or advance his own interests is merely an egotist, and an assassin; but, the man who sheds another's blood, without a just, or even a worldly selfish purpose, is a votary of cruelty. Yet, if tried by this canon, how many deserve this designation! Nearly six thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world; and it is melancholy, painful, and most humiliating to look back through this long, mazy vista of gloomy atrocity, and reflect that, during the whole of this vast period, there has scarcely perished one anointed king, one single

person that has possessed despotic power, who has not deserved at the hands of his fellow men, to have inscribed upon his tomb, this just, and appalling verdict, —Here, lies the oppressor of his race; *the votary of cruelty.*

Why then, should we deem ourselves superior in virtue to so innumerable a multitude of our predecessors? Why then, should we arrogantly think that, even if placed in similar situations of indulgence, there is within us, the power of resisting the temptation, which has triumphed over so many? I have, I avow, little faith in the doctrine of the great inequality of the *natural* distribution of virtue and vice, among the generations of men. I believe that all of us are born creatures of good and evil; and that each never originally possesses his share of these antagonistic principles, in any very dissimilar proportion to that, of his neighbour; the subsequent superiority, which either may attain, being the consequence of education and of that reflection, which is the growth of it.

Let not then, the modern Pharisee glorify himself in the supposition that he possesses no portion of a vice which was so strikingly prominent among the children of the past. It *is* within him; controlled, it is true, but, not extirpated; it exists, though it slumbers equally in the want of adequate temptation, and of the opportunity, and facility of indulgence. Tiberius was a good man, until he became an emperor; and, had he died without having attained a throne, all the world would have pertinaciously believed that he would have filled one gloriously. He only who has been tried,

and fallen, or conquered, in his trial, can tell either that which he is, or that which he is not. The lord of an imperial revenue is as justly entitled to boast that he never entertained the disposition to steal his neighbour's loaf, or the Bedouin Arab, to pride himself on his exemption from the vices of an artificial life, as the majority of the members of a highly civilized, and peaceful community, have to congratulate themselves on their abstinence from the active practice of cruelty. Who can assert what might have been the rich man's principles of honesty, had he been poor; what the Arab's unsophistication, had he been born the inhabitant of cities; or what the extent of the tenderness, and forbearance of the pseudo philanthropists, who may affect to be shocked and disgusted by my crimes, had they been thrown on times of strife, anarchy, and oppression; had they endured, what *I* have endured, wrong *irreparable*, and *consequently*, temptations to vengeance, which were irresistible.

Yes; believe me, few of us have degenerated from the iniquities of our forefathers: in all that is evil we are worthy and emulous scions of the parent tree. Our more ferocious vices only slumber; and require but propitious circumstances to awaken them, in all the increase of vigour with which a long rest has supplied them. The infant now, is naturally quite as irascible, as envious, and as vindictive, as ever was the offspring of the most facinorous Philistine; the existing boy, too, derives quite as much delight from the torture of a butterfly, or a beetle, as did his predecessor of two, three, or four thousand years ago; and th

man of the present day, were he not restrained by the strength of the laws, which, in the indirect knowledge of his own infirmity, he has, in the long course of ages, imposed upon his powers of self-indulgence, would again eagerly and cheerfully lay his fellow on the wheel, the cross, or the gridiron, rub the rust, from the screw and the pincers, re-pile the fagots, and depopulate continents, in the *names* of religion, or policy, of heresy, or state-necessity, of Moloch or Mahomet, but *really* in the fell and insatiate thirst of human blood. Not from an examination of myself alone, but from an equal knowledge of others, do I deduce my judgment; and I aver that man is a *savage animal;* and not the less dangerous and sanguinary, because his paw wears the velvet of civilization. Give him but sufficient incentive, and to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, he shall without an instant's hesitation, discard his artificial fetters, his tutored tameness, stand erect in natural, and inherent ferocity, rend, like a garment, his prey into fragments, and gloat exultingly upon its expiring agonies, with all the fierceness, and all the gusto, of the rudest times.

But I have too long dwelt on the bias of the human mind to cruelty. I have not, however, pursued the unwelcome theme, in the selfish and fallacious hope of diminishing my own guilt, by inculpating others. My reflections commenced in a desire to trace from their germes, the vices that were in my heart; and in this effort, my mind was naturally directed to the many indications I had observed of the frequent, but unconscious existence of similar infirmities in the breasts of

my fellow men. I wished therefore, and none can tell how fervently, to awaken them to a sense of a danger, the more fearful, and insidious, because seldom, if ever, suspected; and to implore them to encourage *systematically*, and resolutely, feelings of truth, charity, and forgiveness, until the effort shall determine itself into a habit.

I have still one feature of our abode to describe: it was built on a small island, on the northern side of a sheet of water, which might most justly have acquired the appellation of the *Dead* Lake, so asphaltine was the nature, and dark, and gloomy the hue, of the fluid of which it was composed. Indeed, as I believe I have before remarked, the whole character of the scenery around us, possessed a most remarkable rigidity. From my earliest infancy, I was only accustomed to the vicinage of all that is harsh, and grim; nothing gracious, nothing emollient, ever presented itself to my eye. Without our doors, was a rock black as night, a hard-featured tree, a mine of iron, a mine of lead, a chasm, a gorge, a soil impregnated with sulphur, utterly destitute of herbage, but rich as cupidity itself could desire, in valuable minerals, a general aspect of stern, and savage desolation: within our doors was—*my father*.

Ours, indeed, was not the land of promise. Often when I have gazed from our windows, at night, and seen our little lake, the very type of Acheron, surrounded as far as the eye could extend, by an ocean of flame, I have rather been prone to fancy myself in the valley of Hinnom, the Gehenna of fire. And no

very violent perversion of the imagination did it require, to entertain implicitly this belief. Gigantic veins of coal that had been ignited by the carelessness of the semi-savages who tenanted the bowels of the earth, burned incessantly, night and day, in our immediate vicinity, for many years. In addition to this striking spectacle, were the numerous towering columns of white, fierce, flame surmounted by the most brilliant scintillations, and a thick heavy wreath of suffocating smoke which issued from the mouths of all the different mines. And occasionally, a roar, and a crash, terrific as thunder in a tropical clime, echoed, and re-echoed in astounding, and deafening reverberations, would smite upon the thrilling ear; while a body of light that seemed to extend to the very skies, suddenly burst in insupportable splendour upon the dazzled, and shrinking eye, as some compact and enormous rock, which impeded man's pursuit of his divinity, gold, was hurled in innumerable fragments into the air, by the irresistible force of that tremendous agency, the fell secret whereof, according to the creed of an Italian poet, must have been communicated to him, by either the devil, or a *monk*. The dark figures too, of the half denuded, yet picturesquely attired miners, as they repeatedly, and rapidly glided before the painfully vivid light of the intense combustion which they had themselves created, imparted a fiend-like character, and activity to a scene, intrinsically, and in every other respect, so thoroughly infernal, that it wanted but the presence of a colossal statue of brass of more than one hundred and fifty cubits in height,

to make me feel assured that I *was* in Tophet, "which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom," witnessing the Israelites causing their offspring to pass through fire unto Moloch.

Never shall I forget the impression created upon me, by my first acquaintance with nature in a milder form, and man in a less savage mood. This genial pleasure occurred in the abode of a retainer of my father, in the suburbs of the beautiful country town, which was within a score of miles of our stern abode. His, was one of those sweet cottages which the wealthier peasantry of all nations, occasionally create, and occupy; and I visited it at that season of the year, the month of June, when all its simple, but fascinating attractions were in their greatest perfection. It was surrounded by a fertile, placid, and smiling country, full of rich woods, and gentle uplands and lowlands; and it stood in the midst of a garden thoroughly cultivated but eminently rustic, and picturesque, and therefore of infinite beauty. How perfectly do I remember the ecstasy, which in my early boyhood, I experienced, when I first entered this lovely spot. Oh, the exquisite scent of those sweet flowers! even at this moment, I seem almost to entertain anew the pleasure I then felt, so deeply, indelibly, was it impressed upon me. I ran from rose-bush to rose-bush, with a rapturous eagerness, and a sense of enjoyment, that was almost delirious. My avidity was insatiable; tremulous with emotion, I literally reveled in perfume; and thought I could never sufficiently indulge the divine faculty I had discovered.

The inhabitants of the cottage too, made an impression on me. They consisted of a father, and two daughters: the former, courteous, and alacritous as he always was to the son of his lord, nevertheless, did not win my heart; but, the children were fascinating. The elder was in her twelfth year, at the period to which I am now alluding. I will not reveal her name; I will therefore, call her, Ianthe: subsequently, I shall recount concerning her, much that I regret.

This, as I have said, was the first intimation I ever received of the existence of a landscape less savage than our own, or of a disposition more human than that, of my sire.

And yet, in making this assertion, I am most unjust to one individual; and that individual, a dear, and near, kinswoman. No mother, alas, had I, to act as a monitress to my father, and a protectress to me; she having died in a foreign land, in my earliest childhood, a few weeks after she had given birth to a daughter, that fond, and fair sister of mine, to whom I have just alluded. She was indeed, a lovely, a virtuous and a pious girl; but, I shall now add no farther description of her character, as the narrative of her actions will far more amply, and satisfactorily reveal it. I shall merely state, that perhaps, her only fault was, in my opinion, her too exalted estimation of the extent of filial duty. In vain I repeated to her that, in our times, a daughter and a parent were neither required, nor intended, to play the relative parts of Iphigenia, and Agamemnon: at one period of her life, I verily believe that had occasion occurred, she would have possessed

resolution to undergo voluntarily, the self-sacrifice to which the Grecian maiden was forced to concur.

Having now sufficiently defined the general disposition of my boyhood and early youth, I will proceed to the period when I was eighteen years old, and detail the particular feelings, and character which I then possessed.

I was remarkably athletic, and active; and my mind strikingly partook of the nature of my physical being. I was in a perpetual state of restlessness, and excitement; the ceaseless prey of ten thousand irregular, and undisciplined thoughts, and aspirations. I wished, I knew not what; I sought without desiring to find; and yet, I often found that which I never desired to seek, disappointment. Hour after hour, and day after day, I passed in solitude, for my father almost wholly monopolized the society of my sister; not, be it supposed, in consequence of any affection for her, but, of the almost menial services she rendered him, in her zealous fulfilment of all his numerous selfish wants, and whims.

Thrown thus wholly upon myself for amusement, and instruction, I would often wander, from morn till eve, among our wildest and most desolate scenes, and utterly abandon myself to the impetuous current of my thoughts. One of the principal disadvantages of this kind of life was the strong encouragement it afforded to the development of the morbid sensitiveness of my nature. The want of the habit of mingling among men, and strangers, occasioned the disquietude I experienced whenever I was permitted to repair to the neighbouring town; and this feeling gradually, and in-

sensibly increased to such an extent that, at last, I lost the desire of frequenting the haunts of my species.

It may be asked, however, why I did not follow my sister's example, and associate with my father. Did he forbid my presence? No. But, at this period, I cannot say we were, *mutually*, sundered, for *he* never *was* attached to me; yet, sundered we were, and for ever. *I* was divided from *him;* not, however, at this time, was I conscious of the existence of the eternal barrier between us. I avoided him instinctively, not premeditatedly. I was exiled from all intercourse with him by his moodiness, his consummate insensibility, his utter want of all natural affection, his incapability of entertaining one generous impulse. Already I began darkly to feel that I could have endured severity, rebuke, transient, and unwarranted passion, without repining; to even personal chastisement, however unmerited, I could have submitted, without a murmur, had any atoning transport of contrition, and kindness ensued, or occasionally varied the repulsiveness of this, or similar, injustice, and oppression. But, the cold, rigid, stern impassiveness of his conduct; the eternal absence of all response to the affection I once used to entertain, and to testify; his utter indifference to my presence, or my absence, my sickness, or my health, my pleasures, or my pains; the impossibility of ever instigating him to sympathize in any one emotion of another, of even rousing him to be conscious of any existence but his own, and that, of those from whom he required the gratification of some immediate want; his sullen abstraction, his entire devotion to his parti-

cular pursuit, and his boundless egotism:—these, were the causes that first alienated me from the author of my being. Often, and often, when gazing upon him, have I thought, with a sad sigh, on the noble speech of Themistocles, and felt tempted to address it to him, with this slight paraphrase: "Strike me, father, but *love* me!"

I am now however, rather anticipating the current of my thoughts; at the time, to which I am alluding, I had not sufficiently analyzed them, to be accurately conscious of the causes of my reluctance to frequent the society of my parent, and of the gradual diminution of my natural affection for him. I merely felt an impulse, and without reflection, or introspection, indulged it instinctively.

But, though thus repelled by one object to which it would naturally have attached itself, mine was not a mind to resign itself to repose, and exist tranquilly, and sterilly, without passion, or desire. As I have said, I was a prey of many, that begot in me, a thousand confused, and undigested thoughts, and aspirations. Among however, all these crude, and contending sensations, existed, at this period, one marked, if not predominant feature; my love of studying the records of the Ancients.

For the History of the Moderns however, I had no such partiality. In resorting to it after a communion with its grander predecessor, I seemed to feel that I was confined, compressed; all is, at once too definite, and too little; there is no space for the flight of the mind. A sufficiency of uncertainty exists, it is true;

but in it, there is neither interest, nor grandeur. That which is lost to us, we do not seek to know; and much that is known to us, we could almost wish were lost. All is ignoble; we do not even look on countless masses of slaves stirred by one giant intellect; equality, and mediocrity of mind and destiny, of individuals, and nations, are the principal, and most fatiguing features of the unimpressive picture; and, *savage*, *bestial*, *disunited*, and *puny*, are the epithets which most accurately characterize the people of the dark, and middle ages. Omit the episode of the Crusades, and this opinion comprises about eleven hundred years of the History of the Moderns; from the time of Theodosius, to that of Charles the Fifth.

But studying the records of the Ancients, is like viewing a gigantic cavern in a foreign land; all is grand, towering, misty, stupendous, and indefinite; in the vast obscurity that confronts us, no end appears; and yet, we *know* that an end must exist. The immensity, and novelty of every object bewilder, and astound; time, locality, and circumstance alike combine to excite our interest, our wonder, and our respect; the imperfect, and visionary view we obtain of all even that is most prominent, and detailed, and the probability of never entirely penetrating the mysterious veil that shrouds them, pique our curiosity, and, by stimulating our imagination, render the spectacle doubly impressive, and memorable.

This was the occupation that, at this time, possessed a remarkable fascination for me. I literally lived among the people of the past. Thebes, Baby-

lon, Ecbatana, Syracuse, Tyre, were names far more familiar to me than those of the cities of my own land. But my acquaintance was not confined to these names alone; I knew, or fancied that I knew, every portion of the minutest arrangement of their streets, their squares, and their gardens. Sitting on a desolate rock, in the land of my birth, I accompanied some few of the most illustrious of their inhabitants, through the dense crowd of countless and admiring multitudes, to the baths, the judgment-seats, the temples, and the palaces. I followed them even to their homes; I conversed with their slaves, and their wives; admired the gorgeousness of their dresses, the magic splendour, and vastness of their halls, and domes; sympathized with them in their restraints, discussed the affairs of their neighbours; and abandoned myself to what I supposed, might have been the more sober and stately character of the scandal of these great, and impressive, though semi-barbarous times.

These were among the happiest hours of my life; but, I recur to them thus minutely; not because the retrospection affords me any pleasure at this moment, but because they too, I now feel, were then *insensibly* auxiliary to the production, or rather, to the encouragement, of that train of reflection, and tendency of disposition, which subsequently led to my eternal destruction.

Among all the features of the ancients, not one, perhaps, is more striking than the frequency of the occurrence of the most heinous crimes mutually perpetrated by the nearest relatives. These narrations

I used to dwell upon with an irresistible sympathy; a mixture of reprobation and interest, which I cannot define; but which must have possessed their pleasure, or I should not so repeatedly have submitted myself to the entertainment of them. By the continuity of these reflections, I insensibly eradicated from myself that horror, which the first contemplation of a crime in direct violation of the most sacred laws of nature, never fails to occasion in even the least humane; and proportionately familiarized myself to the dangerous consciousness that the most intimate ties of blood cannot always protect the aggressor from the retribution of his victim.

I know not whether I err, but it appears to me that every body must discern something very striking in fiery, inveterate hatred, *if mutual.* If however, only entertained by one party, its object being passive, and unresisting, it assumes the character of malignity and oppression, and betrays its real odiousness unmitigated by any of the more dignified features which vice sometimes assumes. But, if a hatred of the former kind, subsists between the nearest relatives, through whose veins flows the self-same blood, it possesses for the observer, a still more remarkable and thrilling interest. Mother arrayed against daughter, father against son, brother against brother, are moral monstrosities which stir in us our strongest, and wildest sympathies. In the ancient combat of Eteocles and Polynices, there is a savage, and ferocious grandeur that commands our attention, creates our awe, and almost excites our respect; the very enormity, and fear-

ful singularity of the crime, the very extent of the violation of the most sacred of both divine, and natural laws, invest it with that degree of apparent improbability, and real terror, which are the principal sources of poetic interest, and raise it altogether above the horror, and disgust, that a less immoral, and more vulgar, offence would occasion. We look on and tremble; we can scarcely believe that two brothers could have been inspired by so deadly, so infernal an animosity; and yet, there is something in the image that possesses more than the power of the basilisk, for it has fascinated even the *mind;* and though we *loathe,* we never can *forget,* it.

In the self-love and vanity of our hearts, we may indignantly disclaim our weaknesses; but all our codes, our institutions, our social regulations, our prejudices, our very thoughts conspire to show, that, *vast* crimes contain a majesty which almost sanctifies them, in our eyes: the man that slaughters his neighbour is exterminated as an assassin; but, the butcher of a nation is deified as a conqueror.

I know not whether I express the feelings of other men; such, however, were those I entertained at this period of my youth.

It is remarkable that my fondness for reading the History of the Past, was rather sustained, than lessened by the development of an all-powerful passion that might have been supposed most certain to have ingulfed every less feeling in its raging whirlpool. I am now arrived at the occurrence of a change, which may be considered one of the great climacters of my life.

I recur to the hour, when I first became the prey of that omnipotent god, and demon, *Love*.

Long however, did it reign over me, before I was endowed with the faculty of discovering the source of my uneasiness. I have described this uneasiness; my tumultuous thoughts, my objectless desires, my incapability of rest. There was within me, a fiery, and irresistible incentive to perpetual action, and exertion of mind, and body; but its effect was mechanical; I neither knew, nor suspected its existence; and I yielded myself passively and unconsciously to its impulse. My heart was in flames: but, like the eternally condemned in the Eastern fiction, though my suffering was infernal, I could not discern that I was burning.

Silently and insensibly did this insidious, and imperious passion, obtain an unbounded influence over my imagination. It gradually became the supreme director of my thoughts and feelings; and, without the shade of a suspicion of my bondage, I was its entire slave. I could no longer see but through its medium; and every thing I regarded, received from it, a colour. I neither slept, nor ate; night and day, I lived in a state of disquietude; but, all the while, was as ignorant of the nature of my pang, as I was of the oppressor, the incubus, that inflicted it.

Still, however, as I have said, I retained my predilection for my favourite study. Potent as was the passion that had arisen within me, it rather coloured and moulded, than destroyed; it rather directed into different channels, old affections, feelings, and prejudices, than substituted new. It seemed to possess

none of the spirit of innovation; but to proceed with a cautious respect for the ancient occupants of its sudden conquest. Would that it had been the veriest exterminator, and eradicated every feature which then formed a portion of my being.

But though I still recurred to the events of the past, with even more than my former assiduity, and gratification, yet the object was almost wholly changed. Instead now, of dwelling with interest, on the mystical, the grand, and the atrocious, I reaped my pleasure from a very different field. My attention gradually became exclusively directed to the gentler, and the better, portion of the Historian's theme; and, among the most beautiful heroines of antiquity, I only found so many mistresses for my unconscious idolatry.

I cannot describe, and possibly, none can conceive, the pleasure which I derived from this vagary of the imagination; and often, during the lapse of whole, and successive hours, I used to sit, and unreservedly abandon myself to the indulgence of it. Each individual whose character, or reputation struck me, I endowed with a form, invested with a being; and then, I never tired of arraying them all before me, establishing comparisons, elaborately, and minutely criticising their various pretensions to beauty, and indefatigably examining them, under all the different phases in which I chose to present them to my scrutiny. Mine, indeed, was a supreme court: I was at once creator, and exterminator; denouncer and defender; and, however iniquitous my decree, it was yet never disobeyed.

For a time, the principal, and most successful com-

petitors for the largest share of my affections, were Atalanta, Stratonice, and a Roman Matron. Atalanta! A *running female!* There is something so exquisite in the idea of a woman who *can* run with grace, an achievement which some recent author declares to be impossible. But could he have seen *my* Atalanta, however great the extent of his critical fastidiousness, or acerbity, he must have confessed that he had erred. She was perfection. My principal pleasure was to fancy her engaged in the midst of her swiftest race, contending with the gentle wind, which, bearing elegantly behind her, her white and floating garments of almost ethereal texture, revealed conspicuously to my enraptured eye, the enchanting outline, and proportions of her divine form. When I had sufficiently admired her attitudes and actions, in her almost bird-like flight across the plain, I made Hippomenes drop one of his golden apples; and then, I fancied the sparkling eyes, the playful smile, and childish eagerness, with which the gay and airy nymph gracefully stooped to seize the glittering toy. Quickly, however, she resumed her career with the rapidity of light; when, another of the treacherous baubles judiciously cast in the vicinity of her path, instantaneously arrested her speed, and again diverted her attention from the progress of her artful, and also, swift-footed competitor. After a few brief, but valuable, moments devoted to a rapturous admiration of her precious prize, she renews her race with the lightness and air of a swallow sailing with the breeze. But again the fatal stratagem is too successfully repeated; and, after her recovery from

the reverie of pleasure which the possession of the third apple had occasioned, the luckless and artless maid, raising her eyes, sees with astonishment, and panic, that her cunning, and dexterous competitor has arrived at the goal. Then, I fancied her tearful glances, and disconsolate looks; her doubts, her apprehensions, her mortified pride, and her dejection: the expostulations, prayers, arguments, and artful flatteries of her lover, and conqueror; the maid's gradual restoration to serenity; the faint sunshine of an incipient smile hovering over her fragrant lips: the entire relaxation of her rigidity; the first birth, and scarcely perceptible progress, of her interest in the eloquence, and in the gallantries, of her crafty suitor; the rapid development of this feeling: and finally, her submission to, and union with, the man who has had the skill, and the fortune, not only to vanquish, but, to win her.

Surely, this is a bewitching fiction! as playful, elegant, and poetical in its action, and conception, as the image itself is beautiful to the imagination: and even now, spiritless and prostrate as I am, I think that it is well worthy the wild and passionate admiration which it excited in me, in the days of my youth.

Stratonice seated by the sick bed of Antiochus, occupied a very inferior position in my estimation, and even the Roman Matron, my favourite personification of all the dignity, simplicity, chastity, and rectitude, of the best of the ancient times, could not vie with the graceful, and fascinating Atalanta.

But one there was, who not only *did* vie with her, but far surpassed her. I allude to the bride of Ti-

granes, the Armenian Prince. The incident that immortalizes her, is recorded in the Cyropœdia; but celebrated as it is, I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing it succinctly.

The great Cyrus having hostilely entered into Armenia, acted so skilfully, and promptly, that, without the interchange of a blow, he made not only the King of that country, but his entire family, and court, his prisoners. He then determined to bring them to a trial; and, for this purpose, assembled the captains of the Medes, and the Persians, as well as all the chiefs among the Armenians themselves.

When the day of judgment arrived, Cyrus having required the King to solemnly promise that he will answer all his questions truly, demanded whether he had not justly been made the tributary of his grandfather, Astyages. The royal prisoner being compelled to answer in the affirmative, he is then asked what reason he can allege for having violated the treaty. He replies none, but the desire of acquiring liberty for himself, and for his children. Cyrus then desires him to say, what would be the meed he would award to one of his own vassals, if he should have adopted towards him a similar course.

"Though I should pass sentence on myself," cried the intrepid sovereign, "I must declare the truth; I would put him to death!"

At these words, Tigranes, his son, tore his tiara from his head, and rent his garments, as though the King had actually been doomed to the fate, he had suppositively decreed to another. Speedily however, recover-

himself he pleaded his father's cause with so much ability, and genuine affection, that Cyrus touched with compassion, turns to the King, and demands with what number of troops, and sums of money, he will assist him in his approaching war against the Babylonions, if he should yield to his son's entreaties, and spare his life. He replies that all he possesses, is at the disposal of his conqueror. Cyrus, on most liberal conditions, grants him an entire pardon for himself; but then, inquires what he will give him for the ransom of his wives?

"All that I have in the world!" hastily replied the affrighted King.

"And to save the lives of your children?" demanded Cyrus.

"Willingly, cheerfully, would I make the same sacrifice for them," rejoined the trembling father.

"Then for this time forth," said his generous victor, "you are my debtor for the double of your possessions; for I return them to you *twice;* once for your children, and once, for your wives. And you, Tigranes," he added, addressing the Prince, who was recently married, "at what price, will you redeem the liberty of your bride?"

"At the price of ten thousand lives, if I had them!" he replied.

All however, received their freedom without any farther concession; and, as they were returning to their homes, they broke into the most enthusiastic expressions of the admiration which Cyrus' generosity, and munificence excited in them. No other subject

was discussed during the whole route; some never tired of extolling the suavity of his temper, and his consummate policy; some, his valour; some, his wisdom; and others were equally energetic in praise of the beauty of his person, and of the majesty of his mien.

"And you," said Tigranes, addressing himself to his bride, "what did you think of Cyrus' aspect, and deportment?"

"I do not know," replied the Princess; "I did not observe him."

"Upon what object then, could you have fixed your eyes?" demanded the Prince in much surprise, not untinctured by disappointment.

"*Upon him,*" she replied, "*that said he would give ten thousand lives to rescue me from bondage.*"

Is it possible for mortal man to imagine a speech more exquisitely beautiful than this! more full of pathos, modesty, nature, and feminine, sublime affection. There *was* a time, when I, the ruthless the remorseless, could never read it, but tears of admiration, and sympathy, stole insensibly into my eyes: so strange a riddle is the human heart!

The passion I entertained for my ideal incarnation of this fair, and virtuous wife, is inexplicable to a being of a temperament dissimilar to my own. By no mortal means, could I render intelligible to a phlegmatic, and incongenial disposition, to such a mind, for example as that of my father, the extent of my idolatry for this creature of my imagination. At night, she haunted and beautified my slumber in visions;

during the day, I passed hour after hour, in her society. I walked with her, I talked to her; and, with her hand in mine, and gazing steadily on her face, I have sat for an entire morning, as perfectly happy, as my fiery and perturbed nature could ever allow me to be.

Yes, mine, was the love that is of the mind; at no period of my life, did I possess any of those grosser particles which characterize the passions of the majority of men. In a far more than common degree, I experienced the *necessity* of loving; but, my imagination was too strong for the dominion of the senses. The most devoted homage I ever offered to woman partook more of the head, than the body, was less spiritual than material; and consequently, contained a force, a concentration, a fire, a madness, which the mere libertine, the simply Mussulman admirer of a form without a soul, can never even conceive.

I shall now commence the narrative of the incidents of my life; and record the effects of my first entertainment of the passion of love for a less visionary being; for one, who though of mortal mould, possessed all the qualities of a creature of the imagination.

THE PARRICIDE.

PART THE FIRST.

While my heart, and mind were in the state, which I have described, thus ready to be inflamed by the first stray spark that might alight upon them, the prelude of that incident occurred, which imparted a colour to the whole of my subsequent life.

One day, when my sister and I were seated at breakfast, with my father, he casually remarked that, if his brother should die, his daughter would be left an unprotected orphan.

Now, nothing can give a more complete idea of the extent of my parent's habitual taciturnity, and reserve, than the avowal of the fact, that, until this moment, neither my sister, nor myself, ever even entertained a suspicion that he had a brother, or any other relative.

But our surprise was destined, if possible, to be increased; for, our father, who seemed resolved to concentrate, in the present minute, all the loquacity that

ought properly to have been dispersed through the remainder of his life, added that his brother was dangerously ill; that he had received an account of the impossibility of his recovery, though he might continue to linger during many successive weeks: that his daughter attended the sick bed of her dying parent, with a constancy and a kindness that were exemplary; and finally, that, when the moment which was inevitable should have passed, and her father been buried, he was determined that the beautiful orphan should find a lasting home in his house.

Here, the oracle ceased, never again to reveal itself with an equal volubility. But, how much the matter, how infinite the food for reflection, with which it had supplied me! My sister, and I talked frequently on the subject; but not to her, or to any living being, did I communicate, or *could* I have communicated, one tithe of the thoughts it occasioned in me.

Before, however, I discuss my own feelings, perhaps, I may as well take an opportunity of relating the causes of this *impar sibi*, this striking act of inconsistency in my father. That he, the least generous, the least charitable, the least hospitable of men, should suddenly deem himself bound to provide a refuge for a destitute kinswoman, was to me, at this period, an enigma, which I could only partially solve. And thus, it remained, a source of curiosity, and perplexity, until the lapse of time, the fair orphan herself, and corroborating circumstances, supplied me with the entire elucidation.

Though he called him brother, the dying man was

but the brother-in-law of my parent, whose sister he had married in defiance of her relative's peremptory prohibition. My father, whose estimation of the obedience due to his authority was very far from limited, never forgave the perpetrators of an act, which taught him that though he possessed the will, he wanted the power to enforce his tyranny. To the extent of his means, however, he exhibited his implacability; for, from the day of their union, until that of their deaths, in spite of all their advances and solicitations, he never would consent either to meet them, or even to intimate to them by letter, the cessation of his sense of injury, and hostility. For years, however, they persisted in their attempts, yet never could effect a reconciliation. Poor victims of their own goodness of heart, and charity! I could have told them that, even though they and their oppressor should have been endowed with a supernatural extent of existence, their labours would have been fruitless; for, they were appealing to one to whom their virtues were unintelligible, and who, when once roused from his apathy, into vindictiveness, cherished it with all the undying tenacity of a weak, narrow, and perverse intellect.

Hard however, as was the heart of the ruthless author of my being, impenetrable as his selfishness appeared, I imagine that even he must at last have been touched by the Christian conduct of his relatives. In some unoccupied moment, that stern monitor, conscience, must have faintly whispered into his ear, a suspicion that all the actions of his life, were not really quite so immaculate as he was habitually disposed

to consider them. Perhaps this misgiving, repeated at intervals, at length, induced a species of half unconscious contrition; which, though not strong enough to instigate him to abandon his animosity, and thereby subject himself to the imputation of having erred in entertaining it, yet, probably, ultimately, compelled him to the adoption of the course, I have narrated. He struck, I suspect, a sort of bargain with his incommodious reprover; if it would tranquilly allow him to indulge his groundless antipathy to his relatives, during their lives, he would, if he should survive them, make them a reparation, by undertaking the charge of their orphan.

There might however, have been other, and even more selfish, motives for this determination; motives that trivial as they may seem to many, had, I am sure, a very considerable weight with so utter an egotist. Œnone, for that was the fair name, of the still fairer girl, was a proficient in many of the less grave sciences; a species of knowledge, which, in my father's eyes, would have been more than an equivalent for a multitude of offensive qualities. The idea of securing to himself another docile, and intelligent pupil, another servant, to whom, under his own occasional superintendence, he could fearlessly intrust the arrangement of the most precious contents of his museum, would have been, I am convinced, alone a sufficient incentive to have induced him to domesticate with a malefactor. Indeed, subsequent circumstances will show that this opinion is very far from being exaggerated. I ought to add however, that my father

had had ample opportunities of acquainting himself with Œnone's accomplishments, and virtues, having several times met her, during his occasional residence in the family of a wealthy individual, in our neighbouring town; to whose house he repaired, in no feeling of friendship, or love of social intercourse, but, in the premeditated intention of cajoling him into the sale of several remnants of antiquity, on the possession of which he had set his heart. It is scarcely possible to describe the perseverance, the calculation, the craft, with which he would patiently labour during whole years, for the attainment of any rarity which he coveted. If his contemned sister had been the proprietor of a museum, she might have dictated the most imperious terms of peace, and he would have accepted them not only with humility, but with thankfulness.

I will now return to the deep impression made upon me, by his memorable communication. My heart, as I have said, was in a state of ignition, and it required but a breath to excite it into a flame. Imagine then, the effect produced upon me, by the knowledge that a maiden, and a "*beautiful*" one—for, of all my father's speech, this was the word that rang most frequently in my ears—would shortly become a resident beneath the same roof with myself; with me, who, with the exception of my sister, and the two lovely children of my father's retainer, had never even looked upon the animate female form, in any fairer shape than that, of the half savage peasantry of our district.

Farewell to all my dreams of the past! farewell, to the Roman Matron, Stratonice, Atalanta, and even to the nameless bride of Tigranes! *Now*, all my thoughts were given to Œnone. She became the mainspring of my visionary existence, the sun around which, my mind alone revolved. Before, I was content to imbody an idea, and to vary its form, until I had composed one that pleased me; and then, I attached myself to it with perfect confidence, never entertaining a suspicion of the possibility of my representation being inaccurate. But now, I had the double excitement of not only investing a name with a shape, but of endlessly conjecturing whether my shadow would bear any resemblance to the substance of the original. I portrayed her to myself, under every possible variety of just proportion, and aspect; majestic, and sylph-like, light as a Dryad, and stately as an empress, fragile and ample, vivacious and reflective, all the numberless and most opposite qualities that the human form can assume, by turns, I accorded to my personification of Œnone.

As the days and weeks advanced, my desire to become acquainted with the object of my thoughts, grew almost insupportable. I watched the progress of every hour; time appeared to me to be laden with lead; and I never ceased to ask myself, When will the day arrive that shall bring to me *my* Œnone? for so, already I delighted to call her. And this strong desire for her presence, caused the selfishness of my disposition to manifest itself in a remarkable manner; for, as I knew that her arrival would be consequent on the

death of her father, several times, I detected myself in the indulgence of the guilty wish that a life so opposed to my gratification, would quickly terminate. Insensible however, as I was, in all that related to self-knowledge, or self-condemnation, I could not but be conscious that this feeling was an inhuman one; and I strove to repress it; but still, it would constantly recur to me.

I feared to ask my father for any information respecting her; indeed at no time of my life, after, I mean, the utter thoughtlessness, and indomitable vivacity of early boyhood had passed; did I ever dare to question, or even accost him, unless he previously testified some indication of a disposition to communicate with me: yet, I must again declare that my repugnance arose, at this period, in no apprehension of his severity, but simply in the chill, the deadly atmosphere of invisible ice, in which he was enveloped.

Respecting however, the present source of my interest, and anxiety, not one word of elucidation did he impart. Morning after morning arrived, and still he descended to his daily pursuits; yet, never did he recur, or even indirectly allude, to that communication, which to him, was only the mere accidental expression of a passing thought; but, to his too impressible son, was the formation of an epoch in his life. I was therefore, left to the quiet indulgence of my hopes, and the endurance of my fears, without possessing the slightest information to authorize the entertainment of either. But, sometimes, when my spirits were high, I delighted myself with the idea that the day of her arrival

would be almost immediate; and at others, I thought with apprehension and regret, that it might be eternally postponed by the recovery of her parent.

At last, one morning, my father made his appearance arrayed in black. My pulses throbbed; I literally trembled with delight; and could with difficulty conceal the elation which I experienced. The repast however advanced; yet, not a word of explanation was uttered; and I began to regard my father's funereal apparel, with a diminished sensation of gratification. Still, his silence continued; and gradually my feelings were growing more in unison with those, which the emblems of death ought to have excited, when, he stated in his driest and most phlegmatic manner, as though he were scarcely consciously uttering the least interesting and most trivial circumstance, that the father of Œnone had expired, during the previous week, and, on the following morning, his daughter would arrive at our abode.

I felt a thrill that I cannot describe; the blood rushed into my face, and then revelled in one mighty gush upon my heart, until I became faint with excess of pleasure; and was obliged to stagger from the room, to hide, and indulge, in solitude, the emotions which were overwhelming me.

How I passed through the remainder of that day, and the ensuing night, I scarcely know. But, I well remember that the prevailing sensation was one of triumph; triumph in the anticipation of having at last secured to myself that fondest object of all my most cherished, and impetuous desires, the power of asso-

ciating to the full extent of my inclination, with a living, an actual woman; no vapid creature of the imagination, but a thing of speech and action, of strength and weakness, and *perhaps*, of passion, and principle, reason and error.

How long and comprehensive was the flight too, that I took into futurity on that night!—what visions of enjoyment, and rapture did I not create; and alas, how little did the final reality accord with my anticipations! Too often, have all experienced a similar disappointment; one, of such frequent occurrence, that it seems as though Fortune purposely, and for the sole gratification of a malicious impulse, determined that we should never realize the events we have imagined, however rational, and probable our conjectures may have been.

But, the night passed; and the morning arrived, and found me with unclosed eyes, still impatiently watching the tedious progress of the hours. At last, unable any longer to endure a suspense, which was rendered intolerable by the restlessness of my body, I sprang from my bed; and, having hastily apparelled myself, took my station at the window, from which I could command a view of the only road to our house. Here, I sat for hours in an agony of anxiety; but, though my desires imparted to my eye, more than a hawk's quickness of perception, I could only discern the accustomed objects, the miners, the fires and the blasted rocks.

At last, a speck made its appearance in the farthest distance; I watched it with an eagerness that for a

few moments, frustrated its own intentions; for, I was blinded by the excess of my effort. I averted my head, and closed my eyes. Then, I looked again in the direction of the object, which had so excited my interest. My conjecture was right; it *was* a carriage! —Slowly, it approached; and at length, reached and stopped at, our gate.

Sudden, and almost irresistible was the impulse I then entertained, to rush down to meet, and welcome our long-desired guest. But, even in that moment of excitement, my habitual dread of my father, arrested me; and I remained fixed to, and trembling at, the window, awaiting in a fever of impatience the appearance of the unknown object of my singular passion.

My heart beat so tumultuously, and my whole frame was so disordered by the anarchy of my mind, that my sight almost failed me. Dimly, and faintly, I saw my father approach the carriage; and a tall, elegant figure, arrayed in the deepest black, and her face completely concealed in a thick veil of a similar hue, placing her hand upon his extended arm, gracefully, but slowly, and almost solemnly, descended from the cumbrous vehicle. Scarcely, had her foot rested on the last step, ere an animal more light, and beautiful than words can express, sprang from the carriage, and vanished in the entrance to the house. So rapid was its action, so brief was my view of it, and so disturbed were my senses, that I could not even distinguish its kind but I thought that it was a fawn. In another moment the whole pageant had disappeared; and I staggered to, and sank on a chair, oppressed, and subdued by excess of emotion.

As soon as I had recovered myself, and conjectured that the marks of my agitation had passed from my countenance, I descended in the hope of encountering that fair stranger, whom, though I pined, I yet half feared, to meet. When I reached the door of the apartment, which I supposed her to occupy, I stood for a moment, with my hand trembling on the lock, in a mingled fit of eagerness, and apprehension. Thoroughly ashamed however, of my puerile pusillanimity, I summoned my reason, and my courage, to my aid, and boldly entered the room; when I discovered that my panic had been even more causeless than I had deemed it. No stranger was there; I found but my sister, who acquainted me that Œnone had pleaded her depression and fatigue, and demanded, and obtained from my father a consequent permission to retire to her chamber, for the remainder of the day.

Though in this communication was the source of much bitter disappoinment to me, yet, strange to say, it contained something of relief. But, in my sister's arms, and resting on her lap, was that, which, for some moments, entirely suspended my consciousness of this mingled feeling, and substituted one, of unalloyed pleasure. She was eagerly engaged in caressing the beautiful animal of which I had but so transient a glance as it entered our abode; and which proved, what I had imagined it to be a fawn. As eagerly, I advanced, to touch and fondle it; then, excited by my own endearments, and utterly unable to resist the impulse I entertained, I almost forcibly withdrew it from the grasp of my reluctant sister, raised it in my arms, and pressed it passionately against my heart.

It was indeed a singularly, and perfectly graceful animal of a breed with which I was wholly unacquainted. Its form was truly and transcendently beautiful; its colour that, of the dove; and its eyes were almost startling, they were so strikingly eloquent. One could scarcely regard them, and continue to believe that the creature to whom they belonged, could be devoid of reason. Every look literally seemed surcharged with intelligence, and sentiment; and they were so exquisitely transparent, so perfectly liquid, that their surface was not discernible to slight and common observation.

The pleasure I experienced in caressing this animal was extreme. Not only was the object most winning, and fascinating in itself, but it belonged to *her*, it had but a moment before left her presence; it had been touched by her; perhaps her breath was still warm upon its face; perhaps it had just been rendered consecrate by her endearments! In these thoughts, I kissed it, and embraced it with a passion and a warmth, that must have appeared unintelligible to my graver sister.

But, the poor animal did not seem to participate in the feelings which prompted my caresses; on the contrary, every action manifested its uneasiness and discontent. His feeble struggles to escape from my grasp; his restless, and plaintive eye perpetually wandering from my face to the door, all indicated his desire to rejoin his mistress. His expressive motions, and looks, were not to be miscomprehended; and my pitying sister immediately undertook to see the faithful animal safe-

ly conveyed to the chamber of the object of its attachment.

As soon as it had disappeared, all my thoughts instantly reverted to their usual theme, self. I then, recollected that I was now doomed to await the progress and termination of another lingering day, before I could acquaint myself with the features of the unconscious object of my passion; before I could look upon the face of the stranger, and the unknown, into whose custody I had committed my heart, and its most impetuous passions. In addition to these, arose other, and more painful reflections: it is true that she was beneath our roof, and the moment of our interview could now be only briefly delayed. But, might she realize my expectations? or if she did, might she deign to acccept the homage, the idolatry, which I was prepared to offer her? Might she not contemn me, and spurn my passion?

In these conjectures, was food for self-torture sufficient to render me insensible to all external objects, and to the passage of time. Almost unconsciously therefore, elapsed the remainder of the day; and the following morning, found me exhausted, agitated, and but ill prepared for the interview, which I even almost dreaded, as much as desired.

But I must not omit to relate succinctly, a remarkable dream that occurred to me, on that memorable night. In one of the few brief periods of perturbed sleep, which, in spite of my restlessness of mind, my extreme bodily exhaustion secured for me, I thought I had clandestinely stolen into the chamber of my cou-

sin. She was lying upon a bed, the furniture and decorations of which were of the deepest black; her garments, and a veil that concealed her face, were of the same sable colour. I slowly, and hesitatingly approached with awe and apprehension; and, after a moment's irresolution, and an internal combat with the weight that was upon my spirit, I cautiously but timidly removed the veil, and discovered a countenance of transcendent beauty, and sweetness of expression. I was enraptured; and stooped to press a passionate kiss upon the lovely sleeper; when, just as my lips were about to unite themselves to hers, I saw the features suddenly change, and assume the exact resemblance of the Medusa of the ancient gem. There, it was before me, a perfect incarnation of this too remarkable achievement of human art; the same exquisite beauty of form, and the same gigantic moral depravity. I was spell-bound; and, utterly powerless and incapable of withdrawing my face from its immediate contiguity to the object of my terror, I felt the eyes of the demon glare into my very soul. Suddenly, a voice, indescribably fierce and penetrating, though subdued, hissed into my ears, "*I am thy Destiny.*" The snakes in the hair arose in fury; one of them darted its forked tongue into my brain; and I awakened in an agony of real fear, and ideal torture.

This vision was but little calculated to aid me in recovering my serenity; and when the hour for our reunion at our morning repast arrived, it found me in a state of ineffable agitation. But, the die was cast; and whether I desired it, or apprehended it, the meet-

ing between me and Œnone must now occur. The moment for which I had so long pined, had come at last; and speedily, I must learn whether the images I had formed of her personal aspect, were destined to be confirmed, or refuted.

I entered the room with the feelings of a culprit, rather than those of a lover. Œnone was there!—I stood in her presence speechlessly, tremblingly, as though I had been arraigned before her, a convicted and dastardly felon to hear the sentence of my judge.

In a few brief moments, however, I recovered sufficient self-possession to observe her, though timidly, and furtively. How beautiful she was! Her countenance pale and tranquil, was of the purity and stilness of the chastest work of the Grecian sculptor's art. Her statue was rather superior to that of the majority of her sex; and it contained a union of delicacy, grace, fragility, and majesty, which, as these qualities are of almost an incongruous nature, is of rare occurrence. But, the most striking feature of her face were her eyes; large, and liquidly pellucid, they possessed a fascination that is perfectly ineffable, so plaintively, beautifully eloquent was their touching, their divine expression. Her dark hair was simply and elegantly divided on her forehead; and the deep sable of her garments contrasted strongly, and most agreeably with the brilliant fairness of her complexion, her neck, and her hands. Her foot was small, but perfectly proportioned to the size of her form; and I afterwards discovered that she possessed that infinitely rarest of all female charms, a delicate, ample, and thoroughly sym-

metrical arm. Not a single ornament appeared on her person; her whole apparel was as remarkable in its simplicity, as in its congeniality to the character of her beauty; but a solitary, and half-opened rosebud, secured in her girdle, was rendered strikingly conspicuous by the strong relief of her robe.

Such was Œnone!

Whether she resembled any of the particular images I had formed of her, I cannot positively say; she could not have been very dissimilar to some one of them, so fertile had been my fancy; but, I well remember that she surpassed my utmost expectations of the extent of her attractions.

My father introduced me to her, in his usual laconic, abrupt, and unpropitiating manner; for, his utter want of all natural affection generally manifested itself in a peculiar coldness, and imperativeness of tone, whenever he spoke to, or concerning, either me or my sister. Œnone, however, scarcely regarded me; not that there was contempt, or pride, in this neglect of courtesy, which arose solely and evidently, in her abstraction and depression of spirit. When I studied her countenance more closely, I plainly saw, the traces of her affectionate vigilance and anxiety, in her attendance upon her parent; and her moral being had suffered even still more perceptibly; she was silent, thoughtful, and, though manifestly desirous to propitiate, generally inattentive to all that was passing around her. My father, who, to her displayed more suavity than I had ever previously seen him evince, occasionally addressed to her a few incoherent ques-

tions respecting her former mode of life; all of which had evidently only the effect of increasing her sorrows, by sustaining and refreshing her memory of the past. To these injudicious and unfeeling recurrences, she replied, for a time, in a broken voice, and with a strong apparent effort to repress her grief: at last, they became intolerably painful, and she requested to be allowed to retire to her chamber. Ungraciously, was this permission accorded by my father, who was so little sensible of another's pain, that, provided he was pleased, he could seriously have required the insect, while he was engaged in impaling it for the purpose of microscopic observation, to sympathize in his pleasure. Thus ended my first brief interview with Œnone.

And what was the impression it left upon my mind? One of unalloyed satisfaction, exultation! At last, I had secured for myself the uninterrupted society of a beautiful woman; and, though her words had been far too few, yet, both speech and countenance, clearly indicated that she was not only intellectual, but highly educated.

After this, interview followed interview, and each only tended to strengthen still more the feelings which the first had originated in me.

There is a sanctitude, a majesty, a sublimity, in the sorrow which is occasioned by death, that no other sorrow possesses. A fond and virtuous daughter mourning her bereavement of her father, is one of the noblest, most touching, and dignified spectacles that human nature can present. In Œnone, this charm was rendered peculiarly impressive and engaging, by

the extreme sweetness of her disposition; she was so mild, so meek, so resigned, yet so profoundly melancholy, that the hardest heart must have been softened by a communion with her. She read me a lesson which ought to have taught me my duty; she walked steadily in the path which I felt myself incapable of even entering: and, such was my vast and conscious inferiority, never should I have believed, unless I had beheld her bright example, that mortal being could have sustained affliction with so divine a grace.

The style and delicacy of her beauty too, superadded an illusion, which tended greatly to augment the sympathy that her sorrows excited. There was something ethereal about her; she seemed spiritualized by the nature and extent of her grief. Her loveliness was of a character far less earthly than aërial; and not her form alone created, but her habits and manners united to strengthen this impression. Her voice, that most powerful, but little considered, and ofttimes undiscovered agent in influencing our estimation of female pretensions to attraction, was so exquisitely soft, possessed a tone so peculiarly sweet, was so clear, so deliberate, so thrillingly musical, that it seemed as though it emanated from no human organ, but was some woodland melody of Nature's own creation. Her actions too, were so gentle, so buoyant, and so utterly noiseless; and her figure and features so delicate, so apparently immaterial, so totally devoid of all that is characteristic of mere plebeian mortality, that often during the twilight of the summer's evening, I have regarded her until my eyes, dazzled and confused by

the very steadfastness and permanence of my gaze, I have seriously deluded myself into the belief, that she was pervious to the passage of light, and that I beheld the rays of the moon permeating her arms, her neck, and her face.

The mere repetition of these credulous fancies will show, at once, the extent of the reverence, and of the passion, I entertained for her. But, what were her feelings towards me! Did she reject, or did she respond to my homage; or was she so totally absorbed in her grief, that she did not even observe the impression which she had created upon me?—How often, and with what intense anxiety, did I ask myself these agitating questions! But, all my observations and conjectures, were equally fruitless; and many, many months elapsed, before I could afford myself any other than a vague and unfounded reply, or attain the slightest clew to an elucidation of my doubts and fears.

When she first arrived at our abode, she was in her twenty-eighth year, and I, in my twentieth; a large disparity of age, at all periods of life, but perhaps, particularly at ours. In addition to this source of a marked difference between us, were added other causes that tended considerably to augment it. Naturally, she possessed a most intelligent mind, which had been highly cultivated by a fond and judicious parent; she had seen the world; she knew how to avail herself of her acquirements, and in spite of all her toleration, and benevolence, she possessed an acuteness which compelled her to discern the deficiencies of others.

In this state of intellectual culture, how much was there to contrast with mine. I was a mere rustic, sensitive, self-mistrustful boy; rustic, however, I mean only in the sense of perfect ignorance of all conventional manners, and of all large societies. To the denomination of rusticity, might also have extended a certain decree of uncouthness of manner; but, in my nature was no particle of the coarseness of the clown. On the contrary, as I shall shortly state, I was possessed of fastidiousness to an excess, which even now, I should be perplexed to explain how, and whence, in the wild and semi-barbarous district wherein I was born, I could have acquired it.

I was not, as I have shown, wholly unlearned. But, I had never received any systematic education. My father, I believe, or some one delegated by him, in my earliest boyhood, had taught me the distinction of letters, and the rudiments of orthography. This, is all the extraneous assistance I ever obtained; and I feel that I may thank my solitude, and the consequent necessity of creating my own occupations, for those spontaneous exertions which have secured to me, the limited learning I possess. But, in my first intercourse with others, this conversance with books was of little utility to me; for, in my utter want of all worldly apprehension, I knew not how to apply the scanty knowledge I had really obtained. Consequently, in comparison with Œnone, I appeared the very personification of Ignorance. I felt keenly, bitterly my inferiority; and what was worse, I saw but too plainly that

she was conscious both of my deficiency, and of her own superior intellectual improvement.

It must not, however, be supposed that I was jealous of her excellence; on the contrary, I adored it. But I was mortified by the fear that her perception of my sciolism might prevent me from ever inspiring her with feelings respondent to mine. How could she love the person whom she could not respect? and how could she entertain respect for him whose too apparent puerilities must frequently have excited her regret, and sometimes, perhaps, a blended sensation of pity and of ridicule?

These apprehensions were the great alloy to the perfect happiness, I should otherwise, at this period, have experienced; they were the golden apple which Discord had cast into the midst of the festivity of my heart. My own feelings told me that a woman must *admire*, must discover, or *suppose*, the existence of a certain degree of excellence in a man, before she can resign her affections to his care. Any delusion of this kind however, I was but too conscious was little likely to operate in relation to me and Œnone. What, then, had I to offer her to attract a return of the sentiments I entertained? What?—Why, the strongest, the wildest, the maddest, the most unbounded, the most idolatrous passion that ever instigated mortal being! And among all the many engines that may be employed in the warfare between the sexes, with a more powerful, a more prevailing one than mine, man cannot pursue his attacks upon the female heart. *Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi:* If you

wish another to love, you yourself must first love sincerely. All the strong passions are contagious; and the mere exhibition of any of them, generally begets a similar, or a respondent one in the breast of its object. But unfortunately, or fortunately, he who experiences an attachment in the truth, fervor, and excess of mine, rarely, if ever, combines with it, any of those ratiocinating faculties which would open his eyes to the value of his possession, and inspire him with the judgment, and the craft, to avail himself of it, to the utmost. Thus, though I was endowed with one of the most potent means of success, I had no suspicion of either its power over another, or its existence in myself: I had eyes, but they could not perceive; and ears, but they could not understand.

We may love as we will, in after years, we may even love more fondly, more calmly, and more durably, but, I doubt whether we can ever again experience that complete submersion of self, in the welfare and interests of another, that supreme perfect confidence, that total absence of all suspicion of the truth and extent of either our own feelings or of those of their object, and that unbridled, unlimited abandonment of our entire reasoning being to the current of our emotions, which *first* love rarely fails to occasion in even the least generous. In all that related to Œnone, the action of my selfishness was wholly suspended; and, for the first time since my birth, my existence was interwoven with that of another. Upon that other, I lived dependent for all my impulses; when a shade alighted on her fair brow, I mourned; and when she

smiled, I rejoiced. Rarely then, were any of my thoughts addressed to myself; I was too much engaged in considering the ways of affording her pleasure, and protecting her from pain.

Thus elapsed the first year after Œnone's arrival at our house. At this period; the cloud had almost entirely disappeared from her countenance; for, even the purest and strongest grief has its term of duration. Where indeed, is the attribute of humanity which is permanent? When I shall have divulged all the passages which have occurred between me and my father, it will be wondered how I could ever have attained the fortitude to discuss, and investigate his character and actions, with the tranquillity I have exhibited. But, there is no feeling, sentiment, or passion, that may not be suspended, if not destroyed, by excessive indulgence. Such is mortal imperfection, that even *remorse* cannot always exist in equal vigour.

For many months I laboured unsuccessfully to engage my fair kinswoman in a friendly and cordial intercourse with me: she retired to her chamber whenever she had the power; and seemed to prefer the freedom and indulgencies of solitude, to all the sympathies, and zealous attentions, which I could devote to her. As, however, the keenness of her grief decreased, she became familiarized to my assiduities; and, at last, even appeared to derive from them a certain degree of pleasure. But, I mean not to imply that, in the ingenuous manifestation of a sad and spiritless approbation, there existed the slightest trace of aught, which even the most sanguine lover could have

perverted into an indication of the return of his passion. She was frank and kind, and, when her cheerfulness returned, cordial; but, she evinced not the smallest symptom of her heart containing the minutest germe of the feelings, which I most desired to excite in her.

While, however, she was tacitly strengthening the attachment and esteem of every body who came in contact with her, especially, of my generous and naturally affectionate sister, she was gradually, and proportionately losing the selfish inclination which my father had, at first, entertained for her. Clearly, have I since been able to trace the whole progress and cause of this change in his opinions; but, at the period of their occurrence, I was too much occupied by the object of them, to even think of devoting my observation to him.

When she had first arrived at our abode, it is now evident to me, that he had fancied he had secured a useful and intelligent assistant in the prosecution of his peculiar pursuits; one, who being entirely dependent upon him for a home, and for subsistence, would, both from feelings of gratitude, and self-interest, be most zealous, and particular in her services. In the first place, however, in contradiction to these conjectures, he discovered that his supposed destitute kinswoman inherited a considerable revenue, and that she required that he should annually receive a certain portion of it, as a remuneration for his hospitality. Now, my father, notwithstanding his great wealth, was by no means devoid of an affection to money; but, he

would have preferred to the possession of it, in this instance, that claim upon her subserviency, which an eleemosynary support of her, would have afforded a selfish, indelicate, and unfeeling mind. This, therefore, was his first disappointment. Still, however, probably, he hoped that, in spite of her independence, her natural sweetness and docility, and a certain degree of gratitude, would instigate her to tender him alacritously, that servile and exclusive homage and attention, which both his vanity and his egotism equally required; and, in this supposition, he continued to manifest to her, the courtesy and conciliation, he had assumed upon her first arrival. But soon, to his infinite chagrin, he found that, instead of the zealous devotion to him of her time and thoughts, which he had fondly expected, she remained, during many successive months, secreted in her chamber, indulging her dejection of spirit, and her recollections of an affectionate and conscientious parent; and worse still, that she paid him, when they encountered, little more court, or deference, than she accorded to the insignificance of his contemned children. In this conduct of hers, originated his second disappointment. But, what must have been his feelings, when he discovered that, as her grief departed, and her spirits revived, instead of even then, making reparation for her previous neglect and offences, by attaching herself exclusively to him, she was so indiscriminating, so blind, and so perverse, as to prefer to pass almost her whole time in my company, or in that of my sister; constantly riding and walking with the one, or conversing or performing on

the organ with the other: all smiling, jesting, and amusing themselves without demanding either his sanction, or participation; deriving their pleasures from their own resources, and malapertly daring to be happy, although his concurrence or permission had never even been solicited!

From this moment, I am now convinced that he regarded his innocent and unconscious niece, with all the malice and antipathy of which his apathetic nature was capable; though, at the period to which I am alluding, he only manifested it by the substitution of his habitual phlegm and coldness of manner, for the degree of warmth, and kindness, which he had originally assumed in his intercourse with her.

Little, however, suspecting the existence of the storm that was impending over our devoted heads, we pursued our thoughtless career of happiness. Œnone had now completely accustomed herself to the company of myself, and my sister; and we formed an almost inseparable society. Her conversation abounded in interest and in instruction for us, in comparison with whom, she might be said to be consummately skilled in the knowledge of the great world; and there was a novelty in her thoughts, and a grace, and a truth, in their expression, that might have fascinated judges far more proficient and fastidious, than her partial auditors. She possessed, besides, a rectitude, a simplicity, a natural love of the good, and the beautiful, and a strong, yet apparently almost unconscious determination never to wander wilfully into the path of error, which influenced all she said and did; and

imparted an additional charm to the lightest phrase, or the least important action. She was, too, the most perfectly humane person I ever encountered; and willingly would she have endured any inconvenience, rather than have exposed herself to the risk of injuring even the minutest insect.

Poetry, general literature, painting, sculpture, and conjectures on the nature of the life, and the pursuits we should lead and follow, if we possessed an unlimited power of indulging our inclinations, formed some of the frequent subjects of our conversations. She was eminently proficient in the knowledge of the works of ancient art; and consequently, one of my principal pleasures was to accompany her through the apartments of my father, whenever he was absent, and meditate with her, on the transcendent statues and relics of antiquity, which they contained.

One day, when engaged in this delightful occupation, I directed her attention to the picture of Medusa; and as usual became so excited by my observation of it, that I portrayed vividly, and with some degree of eloquence, my strong sense of its extraordinary excellence. She gazed at me with surprise, and demanded whether I was serious in my admiration; adding that she had never before looked upon so fell a countenance, one which so completely imbodied the spirit of all that was most foul, and atrocious. I replied that I could not declare myself more literally, or with greater sincerity; that I regarded the object of her animated reprobation, as the very highest achievement of human art; that I loved it, that I adored it; and

would make almost any sacrifice to acquire a similar beauty of feature, and grandeur of aspect.

"Would it not be glorious, entrancing," I continued, "to be endowed with a countenance which all must admire, but all must fear, which should have the power of withering, blasting the beholder, and of creating in his breast every inimical passion, save one, —*scorn;* for I defy the haughtiest, and most disdainful mortal that ever drew breath, to entertain this sentiment, for the possessor of that superb and awful face, that incomprehensible combination of physical perfection, and stupendous moral depravity. Would it not, I repeat, be glorious and godlike, to stalk through the world, alone in might, and majesty, and see one's adversaries hurled to the earth, writhing, agonized even by a look!"

I expressed myself energetically; and I felt my forehead glow as I portrayed the image, which the weakness of my heart desired to realize.

"Godlike!" she repeated with strong emphasis, "*fiend-like* is my sentence. And for that wish of yours," she continued with almost equal warmth, "you deserve to be subjected for the rest of your life, to a communion with the demon, that must have haunted the unfortunate sculptor who achieved this too accurate representation; for, never could mortal man have *imagined* a personification of a wickedness so detestable, so monstrous, so unearthly!"

I smiled; I even derived a secret pleasure from having excited her into such unusual energy; she looked like a Pythia delivering an oracle, her eye was

so animated, and her cheek so flushed: but, her speech left a disagreeable impression upon me, which I could not banish during the remainder of the day: and it involuntarily recurred to me, in many a subsequent hour of painful reflection, and contrition.

I conducted her into another room; and I exhibited to her, the statue of Cupid tormenting Psyche; but, I uttered no encomium; I was not desirous to elicit from her so speedily another monitory rebuke. After however, having regarded it for a moment, she said, with a smile, in which there was much of gravity, at the same time looking poringly into my face,

"And this, I suppose, is another of the subjects of your singularly *humane* admiration?"

I felt ashamed to shrink from an avowal of the sentiments I entertained; and I replied affirmatively, but, with a boldness less real, than assumed.

"I think," she rejoined, half jocosely, half seriously, "most gifted, and most gentle kinsman, you would act judiciously, if you were to offer your services to the Inquisition, in the capacity of assistant official. You would then be in your sphere; and who can say what vast improvements so illustrious a genius as yours might not effect in the '*godlike*' art of Torture? How unfortunate that you did not live some fifteen centuries ago—what an inestimable gladiator you would have made!"

As she concluded, there was more playfulness, and raillery in her tone, than seriousness. I made no answer; and, in a few moments, our conversation found another, and to me, more agreeable theme.

It is impossible for any, but those who have loved as passionately, and as really as I, to imagine the pleasure I derived from displaying to the object of my idolatry, all the haunts, habits, and occupations of my earliest years. No country on earth could be more incongenial to the nature of the sentiments I entertained, and to those with which I sought to inspire her, than that, which surrounded us. Rocky, desert, and sterile to excess, yet, it contained not one feature of romance, or grandeur, or dignity: all was mean, dreary, gloomy, and dejecting. But, had it been another Hybla, I could not have experienced a greater gratification than I felt in introducing her to all its dark spots, and nooks; in exploring with her its dullest glens, and chasms; and in relating to her, all the anecdotes of my infancy:—that here, I fell a dozen feet in seeking a vulture's egg; that there, one memorable night, I first saw a wolf, and was obliged, to the sanguinary destruction of my fingers, and limbs, to ascend an almost perpendicular rock, to escape from his savage pursuit: and that yonder blasted stump, I remembered a tall, and stately pine, and was standing within a scanty score of yards from its trunk, on the very eve when the vast mass was hurled by the lightning to the earth.

To all these egotistical recurrences to the days of my boyhood and youth, Œnone used to sit and listen with the most generous patience, and attention; and seemed even to derive a sympathetic pleasure from the satisfaction which I experienced in constituting myself the subject of all my own narrations. Then, I

would arise, and conduct her to another spot; and there commence a new relation, to which she would resign herself with an undiminished lenity.

In all these walks, and wanderings, my sister generally accompanied us, but, invariably, the fawn. This animal I loved so dearly, that I was nearly committing the desecration of saying, that I loved it almost as well as its mistress. I never tired of dallying with it, of watching its graceful gambols, and of encouraging it by my voice and gestures, to exhibit its wonderful activity. It was my passion; I would suffer it to sleep for hours in my arms; deck it continually with the choicest flowers I could procure; and never permit any body but myself to feed it. I taught it a thousand winning, and fantastic tricks: it would obey my slightest action; place itself in the most endearing, and beautiful attitudes; look, and move, as though it were possessed of a human intellect—do all, but speak.

One day, when we were walking in the vicinity of the mines, a large, fierce dog sprang so rapidly, and suddenly, from its concealment behind a fragment of rock, that, fleet as was the poor fawn, it could not avoid its savage assailant. The brute fixed his sharp fangs in its slender neck, and instantly the blood spouted forth. At this spectacle, *my* blood fired as instantaneously. I was, unluckily, sufficiently far from the spot of its occurrence, to be unable to attain it immediately; but, the ground being covered with large stones, and fragments of granite, I seized the weightiest within my reach, and hurled it at the ferocious

beast. It struck, and almost crushed him; and, relinquishing his hold upon his victim, he fled howling violently. But, as I have said, my blood was boiling, and I resolved that the brute should not escape without still farther punishment. In spite therefore, of the entreaties and intercessions of my affrighted cousin, I followed him rapidly even to the mouth of one of the mines. There, another of my missiles attained him, and probably fractured one of his limbs, for he sank suddenly on the ground, uttering yells still louder, and more prolonged. Redoubling my speed, in an instant, I arrived within reach of him; when, seizing his back, with both my hands, I raised his vast bulk in the air, to the full extent of my height, then, dashed him, with the utmost exertion of my great strength, upon the earth. The brute struck, with a dull sound, on the stony soil, heavily rebounded, palpitated for a moment, protruded his long tongue, and then, with one general convulsion of his huge, and hideous carcass, expired.

Ere however, life had quite departed, the enraged voice of a man addressing to me the most contumelious, and irritating epithets, attracted my attention. I gazed in the direction of the sound, and discovered a miner slowly ascending in the mouth of the mine. At this instant, only his head was visible, and judging from his infuriated looks, and insulting expressions, he was impatiently awaiting the moment when the machinery that sustained him, should have reached a level that would enable him to leap upon the earth, and inflict an adequate retribution upon the destroyer of his dog.

While I was regarding him with a ferocity equal to his own, and eagerly expecting his attack, for, all my bad passions were still actively at work within me, Œnone, who had overtaken me, foreseeing the strife to which I was about to be exposed, grasped me by the arm, and, with much agitation, implored me to immediately withdraw with her. Finding me however, inflexible, and observing the huge bulk of my adversary, which every rotation of the windlass rendered more conspicuous, she made one last effort to induce my compliance, by attempting to pique my pride into a co-operation with her intercessions: asking me, tauntingly, whether I, a gentleman, nobly born, the son, and heir of wealth and rank, could yet act so ignominiously, as voluntarily to enter into a fray with a mere ruffian, a being evidently scarcely elevated above the grade of the brute animal I had slain? But, in my present mood, even her entreaties were unavailing; and, emancipating myself from her grasp, I flew to meet the colossus, who had just alighted on the earth; and, towering in his height and strength, stood apparently resolved to immolate me, as an appeasement to his wrath, and to the manes of the beast I had destroyed.

Not more than one second however, endured our conflict; for, raging with passion, I flew at him with the speed of lightning, and the fury of a ravenous beast of prey; and, before he could even prepare for his defence, drove my clenched hand into his face, with a force so irresistible that, staggering beneath it, and retreating a pace or two, to recover his balance,

he fell headlong into the abyss behind him. I felt assured that he was dashed into atoms, and approached the mouth, in obedience to a mechanical impulse, rather than in an expectation of discerning any trace of him. But, to my surprise, I discovered that he had clung to the bucket, which he had overtaken in his more rapid descent, and was suspended vacillatingly, only a few yards beneath the spot whereon I stood. As soon as he gained his equilibrium, he threatened me vehemently with both his arm, and his voice. Seizing a huge fragment of rock, for a moment, I doubted, in spite of the terrified expostulations of Œnone, whether I should not at once put an end to both his speech and his life. But, while I hesitated, he disappeared in the gloom of the vast abyss; for those who regulated the motion of the machine that sustained him, were far too many hundred feet below the surface of the earth, to hear even his turbulent cries, to raise, instead of lower him.

When I had withdrawn to some short distance from the scene of the fray, and the source of my excitement had been entirely removed, I confess that I could not refrain from feeling somewhat surprised at the strange, wild pleasure I had derived from the indulgence of the savage fury I had experienced. At this moment, however, I became sensible of the trembling of my gentle cousin's hand, as it rested on my arm; and my thoughts were immediately directed into another channel. She was pale, and agitated; and the poor fawn, the innocent source of all the turmoil, trotted tremblingly by her side, and looked every moment wist-

fully in her face, as though even in the midst of his own terrors, and griefs, he still was conscious of those of his mistress. I raised the fond animal in my arms, and attempted to dissipate Œnone's agitation, and to divert her mind from the recollection of the strife, by directing her attention to her favourite. I carried it, until we reached a spring; and there, while I was engaged in washing the now stiffened blood from its wound, my fair and fluttered companion gradually recovered her serenity. But, her vivacity did not return to her; and when we arrived at our home, she was still taciturn, and depressed.

As I entered the gate, one of the servants put a letter into my hand; a glance at the superscription informed me that it was from my father. I opened it with some degree of nervous anxiety; for, though I entertained no particular cause of apprehension, I always possessed a latent consciousness that it was in his power, and perhaps, in his inclination, to afflict me most severely; but, it only contained intelligence that was very far from being disagreeable to me. It was couched in his usual, cold, phlegmatic style; it commenced, "Son," and it was subscribed, "Your Father:" and it stated, in a couple of lines, that he had been compelled to repair to the metropolis, whence, probably, he should not return, for several weeks; and that he expected me to live decorously during his absence.

The preparations for the journey he had executed, and arranged with so much secrecy, that he was no only able to commence it, without my entertainment

of the least suspicion of his intention, but even without the privity of my sister, who was in the house, at the very moment of his departure. I relate this trifling circumstance, because it will tend to convey a still more ample idea of the supererogatory uncommucativeness, and covertness of his disposition.

In what cause, or with what object, this sudden whim originated, I entertained no conception, nor did I impose upon my mind the bootless task of attempting to discover an explanation; but, more wisely contented myself with rejoicing in the result. I felt as one, who having lived during many years in the genial climate of a fertile and beautiful valley, whereof the only imperfection was its luckless proximity to a gigantic mountain of ice, which occasionally cast a deadly chill around the hearts of all within its influence, might be supposed to feel, were this baneful source of discomfort, and depression, the only misfortune of a life otherwise supremely happy, suddenly removed. These were the sentiments I entertained; and I retired to indulge them in solitude.

I found that my father had locked, and removed the keys from, all the apartments containing his principal treasures. One of them however, an antechamber, was open; and I entered it, and throwing myself on a chair, abandoned myself to my reflections.

This room, he had evidently but recently quitted. Upon the table, by the side of a microscope, impaled upon a needle, was an insect, in which life was not yet extinguished. Without any distinct perception, or consciousness, my eye occasionally apparently watched

the dying struggles of its mortal agony; and then glanced to the lens of the microscope, beneath which, lay a few drops of water, wherein, by the power of the instrument, was exhibited the spectacle of the larger animalcula attacking and devouring the less. In these two dignified, and humane occupations, scarcely unworthy of the pampered refinement of a Domitian, did I seem to be recreating; but in reality, my mind was wholly engrossed by far different thoughts.

At this moment, a hand was gently laid on my shoulder and my name was softly uttered by a musical, and a familiar voice.

I turned, and beheld my cousin, who unperceived by me, had entered the room, and adopted this mode of interrupting my meditations.

"I fear," she said gravely, and almost sadly, but mildly, "that you possess a disposition which is not altogether averse from the love of cruelty, and its practices."

Strange, but true is it, and most characteristic of my nature, that her imputation to me, of a quality generally considered so odious, and which, by the many, would be disclaimed with anxiety, and indignation, equally whether the charge were just, or false, occasioned me not the least feeling of annoyance: I seemed to be incapable of understanding that cruelty was a vice. But, that sympathy, and regret, which the matter of her rebuke could not create, the tone, and manner of it, effectually achieved. I saw that she was sad; and whether she did, or did not possess a rational, and sufficient cause for her distress, was little ma-

terial to me. I regarded only the result; and my anxious looks instantly expressed to her, the strongest affection and interest. Before however, I could clothe my sentiments in words, she resumed her gentle admonition.

"I have been reflecting," she said, "on the incidents of this morning; and I cannot conceal from myself, that you are disposed to be irascible, and I fear, I must also add, fierce and resentful. Indeed your present occupation, if I were inclined to judge you with severity, might, I regret to confess, justify me in attaching to you a still more reproachful epithet.—Do not interrupt me, I beseech you: were I less interested in your welfare, I never should have undertaken a task so ungracious as that of reproof. Array before yourself then the motives by which I am instigated, and, in consideration of the value, little as it may be, that is their due, grant me a patient hearing. You know not how fervently I desire to be of service to you; the seeds, and fruits of good are within you, I am assured; but, do not feel moodily to me, if I add, that they are mingled with many tares. Willingly, eagerly, would I aid you, in separating the corn from the chaff, the pure gold from the ore; for, none, believe me, would more lament, were you to be benighted in this pilgrimage; or, perhaps, half so much rejoice, *exult*, I may say, were you to follow, undeviatingly, gloriously, the path of rectitude even to the end. You can plead, I am well aware, many an extenuating circumstance in mitigation of the censure your errors deserve; but, you can offer no justification.

Your youth has been guiltily neglected by those, who ought to have superintended, if not undertaken, its instruction; neither moral, nor religious truths have been instilled into you, and the consequence of these omissions is, that you sometimes appear to me, to want even the faculty of distinguishing the right from the wrong. It is my consciousness of the injustice which has been done to you, and my belief in your possession of many noble qualities that have originated in me the strong feelings of interest and friendship, with which I regard you. But, think not that I am inculcating the doctrine of filial rebellion: *you* have not the less a duty to perform, because your father has disregarded *his*. At the moment of your birth, a mutual compact was imposed upon you by Nature; and *his* violation does not exonerate you from the obligation of fulfilling strictly, and honestly, your portion of it; any more than misconduct in you, would have justified him in retorting by a similar course: for, the bond, I repeat, between the child, and the parent, is of Heaven's ordination, and is only dissoluble by the revocation of the life it gave. This is my creed; and I solemnly declare to you, that I preach no more than I feel myself capable of practising, had the Almighty ordained that I should have been subjected to your trial."

She paused; and then added, with less grave impressiveness, but with equal animation,

"I have discussed this painful theme, because I wished to prove to you that, in my estimate of your disposition, I have given you the full benefit of every circumstance which could operate to your advantage:

yet, though I have held the balance with a partial hand, suffer me to say, you have been weighed, and are found wanting. Let me implore you then, to search narrowly in your heart, and if you find a vice, to pluck it out, and cast it from you. Would that I could remove the film from your eyes, and make you clearly see the right and the wrong! If you then, did not love Virtue for its intrinsic beauty, and divinity alone, the wisdom of self-interest would prompt you to offer your whole homage to a Power, that repays its votaries even a hundred fold. Listen, I conjure you, to the feeble advice I have offered you; for, believe me, I entertain for you more than the feelings of a *friend*."

I started; and my looks expressed an interest which could not be miscomprehended: Œnone continued; "I repeat that I feel for you more than the feelings of a friend: let me be to you even as a *mother*, a fond, affectionate, loving mother; and your gratitude shall teach you to be to me,—*a dutiful son!*"

This speech instantaneously exterminated the hopes which the conclusion of the previous one, had as suddenly created. The word "*mother*" grated most painfully on my ears, and the displeasure it occasioned me, must have been very visibly depicted by my countenance; for Œnone immediately added, with a faint smile, though her eyes were still glistening with the gentle dew which the previous excitement of her feelings had spread upon them,

"You will not then, accept me for a *mother?* Well," she added with more gaiety, "I have performed what I conceived to have been my duty to my *son*, and what,

if it prove productive of good to him, will constitute my greatest *pleasure*. And so now, bequeathing you my maternal blessing, I leave you to ponder upon the warning I have given you; and on the fates of Belshazzar, Cæsar, and all those who have arrogantly steeled their hearts against the adoption of that, which has been respectively conveyed to them, by some good genius like myself."

Then, with another radiant smile of exquisite gentleness and benignity, and an affectionate and playful gesture of adieu, she glided from the room; and left me to fulfil most literally, that portion of her advice which related to my consideration of the whole of it.

There were some phrases in this most disinterested, most charitable, and most beautiful exposition of her views of moral duties and obligations, which, emanating from any other earthly being, would have partaken far too much of the tone of monition and censorship, to be otherwise than offensive to my vanity. But this was a feeling that could not have been called into action in my intercourse with Œnone; for, I never even dreamed of a rivalry with her. I should literally have been proud of my conscious inferiority, had I not, as I have before stated, feared that its existence, or rather, her perception of it, might prove an insuperable obstacle to my attainment of her affections. In recurring, therefore, to her admonition, no sentiment of pique intruded on my mind. One feeling, and that, a very different one, exclusively-occupied me: Would she have addressed to me, this reproof at all, unless she loved me? Did not the very great reluctance

which she admitted she had entertained to the fulfilment of the task which she supposed to be incumbent upon her, indicate that it could have been surmounted by no common incentive? And what feeling but one, could have supplied this incentive? With what other reason too, explain the extreme terror and sympathy she manifested during and after my contest with the miner? she, so serene, so difficult of excitement, so religiously resigned to all that might befall herself, so little disposed to the indulgence of merely personal and selfish terrors.

These were the reflections that begot in me an indomitable desire of immediately determining my fate, by extracting from her an undisguised statement of the feelings she entertained for me. We had now resided together under the same roof, and in habits of constant intercourse, unseparated for a day, during a period of above eighteen months; yet, in all this time, never by a word, an equivocation, the shadow of an implication, an inflection of voice, or even by a glance, had I wilfully sought to intimate the love, that was within me. She had ceaselessly been a saint in my eyes; there was divinity in her very robe; the atmosphere that surrounded her was consecrate. All that she touched, approached, even looked upon, acquired an irresistible charm, and sanctitude for me. The very current of air that her fairy form impelled upon me as she passed, created in me a thrill of idolatrous rapture; and the irreverent possibility of attempting to manifest my passion in any actual shape, had never even entered into my imagination. I should as soon

have thought of resolving to desecrate a church, or, to profane the holiest mysteries of our religion.

Many of the physiological productions of Nature are beautiful; earth, sea, and sky are beautiful; it is delightful to gaze on the rich verdant fields, on the vast expanse of the mysterious ocean, and on the bright, deep, glorious blue of a southern atmosphere, but the wide world concentrated in one thick essence of material beauty, could not offer to the admiration of him, who has an eye to see, a head to judge, and a heart to feel, an object so truly, purely, divinely beautiful, as a perfectly lovely and virtuous woman. This was the sentiment, which I entertained habitually in the presence of Œnone; and I felt as she stood before me, in all her excellence of mind and form, breathing of heaven and its attributes, a radiant and glorious incarnation of their invisible being, that she alone, was *proof* of the existence of a creative Power, All-Wise, and All-Good.

After this confession of the extent of the reverence with which I regarded her, it may easily be conceived that I must have endured a violent struggle, before I could so far emancipate myself from my thraldom, as to resolve to give an unequivocal expression to my own sentiments, and to demand as unreserved an avowal of hers. This explanation I apprehended indescribably; but, I dreaded still more the continuation of suspense; and I resolved to hazard the termination of all my hopes, rather than exist another day in incertitude. The final consequence of these feelings and conflicts was, that I mentally entered into a solemn

compact with myself, to fulfil that very evening, an intention, which was at once the dearest wish, and the veriest terror of my heart.

I had been excited by the contest with the miner; I had been excited during the morning, by the communication of my father's departure; by the subsequent interview with my cousin; and still more, by the consciousness of the task which I had undertaken to perform. As the day progressed, this flutter of spirit increased; and ere the hour for our assembly at our final repast had arrived, the equilibrium of my nervous system was completely destroyed.

When I entered the apartment, Œnone and my sister were discussing the events of the morning; and the former was expressing an apprehension that, if my antagonist had recognised my person, I should but too probably be exposed to some serious danger by his resentment. This conjecture seemed to make a deep impression on my sister: and, in much alarm, she entreated me not to venture from the immediate vicinity of our abode, for two or three weeks; until, it might be hoped that, our fray should be forgotten, or, at least, my enemy might be tired of ineffectually waiting for an opportunity of vengeance. But, with a graceless and puerile assumption of audacity, which was peculiarly supererogatory in me, for none could have possessed a greater real fearlessness, I laughed at her apprehensions; and asked her scornfully, whether she really thought that *now*, during the absence of our father, and keeper, when the gate was thrown open, that the bird instead of availing itself of its liberty, would im-

pose upon itself additional chains, and spontaneously seek a still more narrow cage?

This ironical supposition seemed to suddenly suggest a new train of thought to my sister; and, after a moment's reflection, she said,

"I have now lived twenty years, and I have never yet been as many miles from our own door. Let us pay a visit for a short period, to the possessor of the beautiful garden, and still more beautiful child, you have so often described to me. We shall thus not only have the pleasure and benefit of a change of abode, but, the satisfaction of knowing that we are removing you out of the risk of danger."

I was delighted with this proposition; appeal was then made to Œnone for her opinion of it; she seemed as much pleased with it as myself: but, before she expressed her approbation, she said, she required to be informed whether we were assured, that my father would have sanctioned it, if he had been present?—My sister and I were sadly disconcerted by this question; and hurriedly interchanged looks of similar perplexity. Neither of us chose to submit to the indignity of uttering a falsehood; yet, both so much wished to execute a plan, from which each expected to derive a great, though probably very unequal pleasure, that we made a sort of compromise with our consciences; and answered so evasively, and dwelt so much, and so volubly upon the danger whereto I was exposed in our present abode, and the safety which would be secured to me by a removal, that our gentle kinswoman was literally confounded into a concur-

rence in our scheme. It was then, determined that we should depart on the following morning.

In this, and similar conversation, the evening passed, and the night advanced. Every moment, my spirit became more composed; and these few hours would have been among the happiest of my life, but for the recollection of the pledge which I had made to myself, to induce an explanation that very night. Repeatedly, I strove to summon the courage to give expression to my thoughts; but my heart failed me every time I made the attempt, and I was obliged to postpone it again, and again, in the mere apprehension of renewing my previous agitation. At length, I pacified my self-dissatisfaction by most religiously vowing that the first indication of Œnone's departure from the apartment, should be the signal for my confession.

That moment arrived; she stood with a lamp in her hand; she advanced towards the door. But I uttered not a word; my tongue cleaved to the roof of my parched mouth, and my limbs trembled so violently, that I could scarcely sustain myself. She had raised the latch; she was on the threshold; now, paused a moment to again bid us an affectionate farewell for the night; then, turned to withdraw. Still, however, I spoke not: my heart beat with an increased tumultuousness; my dry lips refused to articulate a sound; and I sank upon a chair, gasping for breath.

But, when the door had closed, and her form had totally disappeared, an indescribably painful feeling of self-discontent, and shame, burst upon me in a torrent, and in an excess, that were irresistible. I

sprang to my feet, rushed to the door, darted up the stairs, and overtook her, on the summit. She turned with a look of surprise, occasioned by the impetuosity of my movements. Not, however, an instant's reflection, or hesitation did I allow myself.

"Œnone," I cried——

But, not another syllable could I articulate; and I stood speechlessly before her, panting with agitation. At this moment, my eye was attracted by the radiant whiteness of her hand, as it rested, illuminated by the full rays of her lamp, in strong and beautiful contrast on the dark oak of the balusters. Instantly I caught it in my grasp, that soft, fair, dear hand, and fervently impressed upon it, as though my whole soul had been contained in it, a passionate and thrilling kiss.

The moment wherein my cold, and moistureless lips came into contact with her warm and glowing flesh, a revolution was operated in my entire being, which it is impossible to describe with adequate force. It was more than electrical, more than magical; my whole nature seemed to be converted into flame; and I felt a burning heat encircling my heart, and urging my brain into the exaltation of insanity. The disordered blood leaped, fierce, and searching, as molten lead, through my glowing veins; the element of fire environed me; it was within me, and without, and seemed to eat into the very marrow of my bones!—I panted for air, and, staggering beneath the sensation of incipient suffocation, cast from me roughly the fair hand I had hitherto retained, as though it had been a serpent of worse than African venom; then, sprang

from the presence of the enchantress who had maddened me, with somewhat of the impetus, and not a little of the velocity, of an arrow from a bow, a bolt from an arbalist. An open door was before me; I darted into the room; and, upon a couch that stood in the centre of it, I flung myself in a delirium of rapture. Then, for a moment, I abandoned myself to the full power of my painful ecstasy; I tossed my arms into the air—I turned—I writhed—I raved—I shouted!

But, this indulgence, wild, and frantic as it was, was widely insufficient for the ebullition within me; the narrowness of the chamber oppressed me; I seemed to be losing the capacity of respiration; and the possibility of remaining stationary, formed no longer a portion of my faculties. Forth from our gate, I rushed into the free air, and into the thick darkness of the night. Not a star glittered above me; and the wind drove in humid gusts into my face: but, I had neither sight, nor feeling for any external object. *My* world was within me; and onward I went with the fullest swiftness of my strength, I thought not, knew not, whither. All I demanded was, action! and, impelled by my frenzy, I pursued my headlong, and dangerous course over a country almost unparalleled in ruggedness, and inequality of surface; with the fury, and vehemence of gesticulation, which one may suppose to have been a characteristic of those unfortunate beings, whom the Scripture represents to have been "possessed with devils."

Beneath the violence of this indulgence, and the

profuse expenditure of bodily vigour, the tornado of my mind quickly abated: and in no very many minutes I threw myself heavily upon the earth, completely exhausted, and subdued. Reason then returned to me; and a degree of languor and inertness, which would have been far from unpleasant in any other circumstances than those wherein I was placed, took entire and equal possession of both my moral and physical faculties. But, in the present moment, I could have desired a very different disposition; for, when I proceeded to look around me, and make the most accurate observations which the darkness of the night would permit, I discovered that I had attained to a distance from my home, which was almost incredible, considering the time that I appeared to have occupied in my progress. Of the real extent, however, of this period, I could form only a very imperfect estimate; for the immediate past possessed already in my retrospection all the uncertain character of a disturbed dream.

As most cautiously, I proceeded on my weary return, I was astounded by the discovery of the acclivities I must have surmounted, the chasms I must have leaped, and the precipices descended: impediments of so dangerous a nature, that, in my moments of sanity, with all my intrepidity, and all my activity, and the great assistance of day-light to boot, I should most probably have declined to encounter them. Nothing that I can add, can convey so complete an idea, as this fact, of the extent of the exaltation, and the phrensy, which I had experienced.

At length, however, though frequently I little expected the event, I reached my home in safety. My sensations of lassitude then became delicious to me; and, during the remainder of the night, I indulged myself in reflections on a convulsion, which was pleasure amounting to pain in endurance, but unalloyed bliss in recurrence. And thus terminated the immediate effects of this wild and memorable effervescence of the morbid sensibility of my nature.

The following morning was that appointed for the performance of our short journey. But, before it commenced, I sought, and found an opportunity of addressing Œnone, during the temporary absence of my sister. My mind was wrought to the highest state of tension and excitement; and I was resolved to make the present minute the crisis of my fate. Again, however, for an instant, I stood before her, rendered speechless by the magnitude of my apprehensions.

"Œnone," at last I cried, "*I love you;*" and my whole soul seemed to me to discharge itself on this avowal.

She looked at me with interest, I almost thought with tenderness; but, without the slightest indication of surprise.

"I know you do," she replied calmly, mildly, and kindly; "I have long known that you do; discovered your inclination, perhaps, before you yourself suspected its existence. What, however, did I tell you yesterday? Did I not promise you, that I would be to you as a *mother*—even as a fond and affectionate mother, and you should be my *son*, my dutiful *son*. Fy;

you are foolish; you have spoken thoughtlessly, and inconsiderately; grant yourself time for reflection, and you will perceive, I am sure, your error, and offer me, I am equally certain, some most filial atonement for its commission."

A thousand violent and conflicting sentiments were excited in me, by the manner, as well as by the matter, of this reply. Its bantering tone aroused feelings of indignation, and its implied disapprobation of my acknowledgment, engendered disappointment and bitterness. Yet still, a general air of kindness pervaded it; and, though she was very far from replying to my passion, she did not positively and expressly reject it; the discouragement was solely negative and indirect. Her looks, too, were so affable, so bland, so devoid of all tincture of censure and dissatisfaction, that I could not willingly persuade myself that her heart entirely acknowledged the feelings she was expressing. With these mitigant reflections, powerfully united the habitual sentiments of respect and reverence which I had so long entertained for her; and the consequence of this hasty balance and examination of the hope, and the fear, the sweet and the bitter, which might be extracted from her discourse, was, that I replied with more sorrow and passion, than anger,

"Œnone, why this severity? You, that are the very personification of charity and tenderness, that would not willingly injure the smallest insect, why trifle with the feelings of a sensitive man? Why practise towards him alone, who entertains for you, far more affection than all the rest of the world united,

the very extremity of cruelty? Œnone, answer me, I conjure you: do you love me?"

But not a manifestation of a change occurred in her beautiful countenance; with the same placid expression of gentle satisfaction, the same arch, but tempered vivacity in her sparkling eye, and precisely a similar tone, she replied;

"I am nearly nine years older than you; and when I choose a father confessor, I promise you, that he shall be a little less juvenile, and somewhat more reverend, than you, my dear child. Until, therefore, you shall have attained an age rather more staid, and respectable than your present, you must permit me to decline to answer your question. But, you wrong me, by your accusation of cruelty: and, what is more, *you* yourself *know* that you have imputed to me a crime which I hold in abhorrence; and that the conduct which I am pursuing towards you, solely originates in the very contrary sentiments. You are, I repeat, a child and a sciolist; and I wish to teach you a knowledge of yourself, and others; of both whereof you are ignorant, though with the sanguine character of your years, and temper, you ingenuously believe yourself to be intuitively endowed with that judgment and power of discrimination, which can only be attained by reflection, the experience of error, and of the fallibility of early and undisciplined opinions. And yet, forsooth, I know not why I should thus address you; for I will venture to affirm that all this good advice is making not the slightest impression on you; and that there, as you stand before me, decorously listening, with appa-

rent obedience, yet in the hardness and conviction of your heart, you are still as resolute as ever to make oath, and declare, that you are passionately, despairingly, dying in love!—Why, even the candidates for admission into the order of chivalry used to be subjected to a long period of probation; they watched, they toiled, they fasted, they did religious penance, they underwent inflictions of mind and body, before they were deemed worthy of receiving the spurs. And surely, you will admit that love is a pursuit of somewhat more importance, and dignity, than war? Yet, every foolish boy esteems himself a proficient in the glorious science, within a dozen years after his escape from the cradle!—Come—I will form a compact with you: Behave well; conduct yourself discreetly; exhibit a steady desire for improvement, and I will condescend to appoint you my squire, and strenuously exert my humble, yet best abilities, in attempting to instruct you, not in the art of breaking either lances, or hearts, but in the more difficult, and far more profitable one, of understanding yourself, and others."

How strange, how weak a guide, how unstable a reliance is the human heart! Ere Œnone had concluded her reply, a sudden, violent, and entire revolution had occurred within me. Instead of being additionally exasperated by this deliberate repetition of the playful raillery which had previously so much offended me, I was abashed by the tone of supremacy she assumed; by her serenity, her perfect composure, the utter absence of all manifestation of any feelings respondent to those which I entertained. As she pro-

ceeded, I grew ashamed of my youthfulness; I looked upon it as a detraction from my value, almost as a disgrace; and, mentally execrating it, in the bitterness of my heart, I longed as much for an addition to my years, as the majority of mortals pine for a diminution. I stood before her oppressed, and humbled, by this strong and obtrusive sense of my detested juvenility; and I experienced sensations as ignoble and as puerile as those, which may be supposed to be entertained by a consciously guilty boy subjected to the public rebuke of an abused, and lenient tutor. Like to this petty delinquent, I seemed to myself to have been convicted of the perpetration of some sorry, humiliating fault; and I entertained a sort of confused feeling of obligation to *my* reprover, for not having more fully availed herself of her strength, and literally annihilated me for my presumption. I was cowed, dejected, contrite; and was hastily meditating an attempt to direct the conversation into another channel, when, Œnone gathering I suppose from my looks, the discomfort, and confusion of my mind, kindly forestalled my intention.

"Have you," she said, "reflected on the lecture, which I read to you yesterday, and are you self-convicted of an inclination to cruelty?—I hope you purpose to benefit by my admonition."

I cannot express how grateful I felt to her, for this leniency to me, in my state of evident and utter prostration. I experienced a sensation of relief, as though I had just effected an escape from some impending and fearful degradation; and I answered her questions

with an eagerness, a volubility, and a pertinacity of digression that speedily conducted us as far even as *I* could desire, from our previous theme. Thus, with a striking, but no uncommon extent of inconsistency, I felt my spirits elated, and my gratitude, and my attachment to her, if possible increased, by her abrupt dismission of the very subject which during many months, I had literally been pining to introduce.

While I was explaining to her how greatly she had miscomprehended the nature of my reflections, when she supposed me to have been engaged in watching an insect's agony, my sister entered the room; and, the preparations having been completed, we commenced our journey.

I was, as I have said, in the highest spirits; the day was beautiful; the air, exquisitely soft, and fragrant; and, as our horses bore us rapidly against its balmy current, my feelings of exhilaration even increased. Œnone rode most skilfully and gracefully; the colour gradually mounted in her cheek; a gentle smile grew on her lovely mouth, and occasionally revealed a glimpse of the dazzling treasures within it: her brilliant eyes still more radiantly sparkled under the genial influence of the inspiriting exertion; the rich clusters of her dark tresses danced in the breeze; and the proud feathers in her hat yielded to it, until they lay in picturesque subjection on her shoulder. I gazed upon the beautiful picture she presented, with exulting admiration; and insensibly abandoned myself to the rapturous thoughts which the contemplation of her loveliness never failed to excite in me.

Perhaps, I appreciated her remarkable perfection of form and feature, with the greater keenness, because I possessed a degree of fastidiousness respecting female personal appearance, that can scarcely be supposed to have existed in one so young, and so little cultivated; a proof that this quality, if generally the growth of art, and of communion with the refined, is yet, occasionally, the gift of Nature. During my subsequent life, this feeling increased to such an extent, that a physical defect of any kind, in a woman, became an insurmountable barrier to my admiration: I considered not how many charms she might possess; if she had but one fault, I never could conceal it from my eyes, or divest myself of the consciousness of its existence. The *mind* of an ugly woman must ever have been a *terra incognita* to me: the aspect of the fane always effectually debarred me from a knowledge of the shrine; and though I have sometimes honestly tried, I have ever invariably failed, to acquire the courage to approach sufficiently close to investigate it.

None, however, of these dainty whimsies, exaggerated and sensitive as they were, were destined to be mortified by Œnone. Hers, was one of those rare faces that bid defiance to the sun, as well as to the taper; that not only seem divinely beautiful in the imperfect strength of an artificial light, but, in the fullest, and most powerful glare of day, instead of revealing a deficiency, only manifest an increased pretension to perfection. In short, hers was a countenance, the briefest sight whereof might have incited the most savage misanthrope into a temporary good humour

with his species; and the equal of which, one might not encounter during the pilgrimage of a long life. It was, too, a library of intellect; and *I* was the student that never tired of perusing it, whether by science' sickly lamp, or by the more probing light of nature.

But this recollection of her remarkable personal charms has entrapped me into a digression, which I must now relinquish, and return to my narrative.

When we arrived at the place of our destination, we found our host prepared to receive us, and to afford us the best accommodation of his ample and beautiful cottage; my thoughtful sister having had the precaution to despatch a messenger to forewarn him of our intention of visiting, and probably of residing with him, for some time. The pretty Ianthe, and his younger daughter, were also present, and ready with their smiles to welcome us. The elder of these two fair children particularly excited the admiration of Œnone; she was a laughter-loving, frolicksome, gentle, affectionate girl, buoyant with youth, health, and happiness.

The first object to which I directed the steps of my companions was the garden; that spot which, in my earlier days, had originally familiarized me to the perfectly fascinating charms that may be produced by a judicious combination of nature and art, and had consequently made an indelible impression on my mind. I conducted them through every portion of it; indicated to them, and expatiated upon, all the spots which were most worthy of admiration; and derived quite a puerile pleasure from this exhibition of my entire

knowledge of even the least prominent parts of the locality. Œnone and my sister were delighted with all they saw; the real beauty whereof was infinitely enhanced by its utter, and most impressive contrast to the gloomy scene we had left behind us. Indeed, none but those who have continuously resided, during many months, in some such lair as ours, can imagine the gratification we derived from our sudden transportation to this smiling and halcyon spot; where, instead of a ceaseless environ of the stern, the ignoble, and the sterile, Nature never showed herself but in her sylvan and holiday garb.

Into every nook, every hidden corner and quarter we penetrated; not a secret recess did we leave unexplored; grottoes, thickets, abandoned walks, overgrown with tangled trees, neglected bowers inaccessible to graver, and less inquisitive adventurers; and even into a cavern glittering with stalactites, and rendered so slippery by the exudations from its roof, that we could scarcely make a step without a fall. Quickly, however, leaving this to us, most mirthful, but, most unstable spot, we sought a scene of surer footing. Then, we jointly put our powers of fleetness to the trial; and the combined grace and speed, which Œnone manifested in this gay and friendly strife, surprised even me who was inclined to give her credit for the amplest possession of every personal attraction; but, had never before seen her so completely depose her habitual sedateness, and assume the buoyancy of the huntress nymph of old, with buskined leg begemmed with dew. Our spirits had reached the acme of elas-

ticity; we sported, we jested, we laughed, we sang. At length, the moment of exhaustion arrived; and then, with a tacit, but evidently general, consent, we seated ourselves on the soft and verdant turf, in one of the most beautiful parts of the garden. Here, we panted for a time in silence; the *four* children,—for, it is but just that I should apply to Œnone, and my sister, a denomination, which they had honestly merited by their exertions,—so completely prostrated by their fatigue, they had not even the strength to speak; and, consequently, I, as mutely occupied myself in contemplating that one of them, whose presence would always have rendered a crowd invisible to me, and, in the midst of a galaxy, appeared a solitary star.

We were resting in that quarter of the garden, where the flowers were most plentiful: we were literally surrounded by them; and the scent was divine. The air was laden with sweets, was luscious, and heavy with fragrance; and I could almost fancy that I saw it deposite at Œnone's feet, the burden it was incapable of sustaining. Plucking several of the most beautiful roses, I presented them to her, with gay, and mimic deference. At this sight, Ianthe and her sister, who were at that period of life, when the total subjugation of the physical frame by exertion, is almost impossible, and having Antœus-like, derived fresh vigour from their contact with their mother earth, arose to occupy themselves by following my example. In a few minutes, they returned laden with the choicest flowers, some of which they cast into her lap, and de-

posited the others in a pile at her feet: a proceeding which suggested to me, a new source of pastime; and I said,

"Five of us are here assembled, a republic without a chief, a species of political institution which never has existed, and never can exist. Even in its most liberal days, Rome had its consuls; and Athens, in the height of its pride and power, was little better than an oligarchy. Even Sparta, stern, iron-monied, iron-hearted, Sparta, had its kings, and more powerful still, its ephori. And shall we then, miserable moderns, reject all the most illustrious examples of antiquity? I see by your looks, that you entertain an opinion similar to my own; and propose therefore, that we immediately elect a sovereign: my suffrage is, for my fair kinswoman, the noble lady Œnone."

The delighted children affirmatively clapped their hands; my sister smiled.

"There is," I continued, "evidently, no necessity for demanding either the sentiments or the votes of the present august conclave; I perceive that my proposition is gratefully adopted; carried unanimously, without a division, and with acclamations. Raise then your voices, ye little ones, prostrate your bodies, and offer homage to your queen."

Both the fair and docile objects of my mandate, immediately threw themselves on their knees, and shouted, "Œnone! Œnone!"

As soon as I had roughly twisted a few flowers into the form of a wreath, I also bent my knee: and said,

"Where honour is due, let honour be paid, and freely, and appropriately. To the victor we offer laurel; to the poet, myrtle; to the mourner, bay; and to the lady a coronet of characteristic flowers. The rose is the type of her cheek; the water-lily, of her brow; the blue anemone, of her eye; the honeysuckle, of her fragrance; the primrose, of her humility; the heliotrope, of her affection; the brier, of her virtue; and the rosemary, the bell, and the violet, of her fidelity. Receive then from me, your unworthy subject, most gracious sovereign, this, your crown, the achievement of no merely mortal art, but of nature's own choicest, and express fabrication: receive it, gentle lady, as at once an emblem of your own perfections, and as an indication of the homage, and fealty of your faithful, and devoted liegeman. And now, hear me vow, in my own name, and in that of the remainder of your assembled subjects, to accept you as our queen, and our goddess; we will be renegades to our faith; and we would cheerfully consecrate to you, an altar of the whitest, the most spotless, and the *hardest* marble, as a symbol of your purity, and insensibility, but, lacking the materials, we must at present substitute flowers. Shout then again, ye little ones, and raise your voices to the honour of the Flora of the garden! the queen of beauty, roses, smiles, and" ——

But Œnone interrupted me.

"No!—not, of *love*," she said archly, and significantly.

My spirits, however, were then far too elate to be

checked by this recurrence to the discomfiture of the morning.

"This is too insolent and ungrateful," I mirthfully replied, "and you richly deserve that we should convert the very tokens of our admiration and homage, into implements of vengeance. Aid me then, my fellow subjects," I added, turning to my sister, and the two children, "in redressing the wrongs of your leader, and let us teach this scornful beauty, and ungrateful queen, that an injured people can punish her, even with the sweets it had procured for her."

Thus saying, with affected indignation I cast at her a large handful of flowers; and Œnone, who at the moment was sitting on the turf, laughingly threw herself back upon it, and raised her hands in pretended apprehension of my fragrant missiles. But, they all alighted upon her: and the two children, seeing that she was partially covered with them, in the spirit of imitation, flung upon her an additional quantity. My sister was directly seized with the prevailing mania of the moment; and suddenly, we were all zealously engaged in ascertaining which could be most forward in heaping flowers upon Œnone; a whim which we pursued until the whole of her fair form and face had disappeared from our eyes, and she was completely entombed beneath the large pile which we had previously collected. We then sat down, to admire at our leisure, the work of our hands.

Several minutes elapsed; the heap that we watched, was perfectly motionless; a few more brief moments I

allowed to pass, yet still not a flower was stirred. At last, somewhat surprised by Œnone's silence and passiveness, I said,

"Are you refractory? are you rebellious? Will you not acknowledge the justice of your sentence? Confess your guilt, and we will immediately arise, and release you.

But, no reply was returned; nor was there the slightest change perceptible in the situation of the lightest flower.

Then slightly, yet almost unconsciously alarmed, I said quickly and anxiously, "Œnone, this conduct is foolish. Why do you not answer me?"

Seriously terrified by this continued silence, I sprang from my seat, and hastily dashed away the flowers that covered her, and then—oh God, a spectacle so utterly unexpected, so appalling, presented itself to my horror-stricken gaze, that the first shock and agony of that moment can never be effaced from my memory!

Œnone, she, on whose countenance but a seeming instant before, with the fondest delight I had seen beaming the brightest hues of health and happiness, now lay before me, in the perfect and fearful semblance of death. Her face was paler than the palest marble; and her beautifully sculptured features seemed suddenly to have acquired an almost equal rigidity. Such indeed was the mortal character of her stupor, that I should have deemed the vital spark extinct, had I not observed the large tears forcing their way in quick succession from beneath her closed lids. This symptom of vitality was not lost upon me; and, in an agony of hope,

and apprehension, I attempted to rouse her from her insensibility.

"Œnone, dearest Œnone," I cried, and I pressed her passionately in my arms, "speak to me, I implore, adjure you!"

She opened her glistening eyes: looked affectionately, even tenderly, in my face, and then, closed them again.

I knew not what to think; I could not persuade myself that the few incumbent flowers could have sufficiently impeded her respiration, to have induced a sense of suffocation. Besides her malady seemed to me to bear more of the character of those physical derangements, which are the consequence of strong mental emotions.

"In the name of Heaven," I exclaimed, "I conjure you, Œnone, to torture me no longer. Speak to me, I entreat, and tell me what affects, and troubles you, thus fearfully. What is the source of this cruel convulsion of an existence that is so infinitely dearer to me than my own?"

Again she opened her tearful eyes; and after a scrutinizing and melancholy gaze on my face, would again as speedily have closed them; but both by my voice, and the pressing energy of my action, I urged her into speech.

"You will think me," she said, feebly and slowly, "I am sure very, very weak—and yet I am not generally subject to the dominion of these superstitious feelings. Indeed, indeed I know not how to tell you the thoughts that have so utterly disconcerted me. I

suppose, and believe, I must attribute them to the consequent re-action of the great excitement of spirit, which I have experienced this morning."

"What is it you would say?" I exclaimed anxiously; "dear Œnone, you but add to my pain by this evasiveness. Tell me, I beseech you without disguise, and without delay, all that you have to reveal."

"I will," she slowly replied; "I must: and yet, the strong sense of my weakness, my utter, idle, reprehensible weakness, inspires me with a reluctance which I can scarcely surmount. Strange that I, who am so little subject to the entertainment of these painful, sorry phantasies, should have thus unreservedly yielded myself to so monstrous a delusion. But, it assailed me with a force, which appears to me no human reason could have resisted—and even now, I sink beneath it." And she added, with a slight shudder: "Take away those flowers."

She pointed to some few, which still remained scattered upon her person. I removed them instantly, in strange, and anxious, but silent surprise. After a moment's pause, she resumed, with however, evident, yet subdued, reluctance,

"Pity, and pardon my idle, culpable infirmity, and I will avow it to you; though I know you would be justified in regarding it with a contemptuous compassion, rather than with either of the feelings which I solicit. But, I repeat to you, that I am not generally superstitious; and yet," she closed her eyes, while she continued, "it appeared to me, but a moment ago, with a clearness, a force, and a truth, against which

all the efforts of my rational faculties afforded no bulwark, that, every flower as you threw it upon me, was suddenly converted into *a clod of clay*. As each alighted on my breast, I could not believe that I had not sustained a heavy blow; and I felt, irresistibly, mortally, as though *you* were engaged in laying me in a premature and living grave." And she added, apparently, rather thinking aloud, than addressing me, or any of her auditors, "Surely, surely, this phantasy is ominous of evil?"—

As she uttered these words, the tears burst in renewed streams from her eyes; and she concealed her face beneath her hands, while her whole frame was violently shaken by the agitation of her mind.

I was awfully, indescribably shocked by this singular detail. I *was* superstitious; and the contagion of her melancholy delusion had communicated itself to me in its fullest extent. Yet, I was obliged to affect an utter incredulity; for, I had to fulfil the hard and double task of not only withstanding my own depression, but, of endeavouring to remove hers. I therefore, affected to smile at her apprehensions, and strove to sooth and cheer her into the restoration of her serenity, both by my kindness and arguments. In this attempt, I was most affectionately aided by my sorrowing and compassionate sister, and by the poor children, whose smiles had been converted into sympathetic tears by Œnone's grief. Tenderly they threw their arms around her neck, and, while they themselves sobbed upon her breast, fondly caressed, and most endearingly strove to console her, in such

touching phrases, and with such simple reasons, as their youthful and uncultivated understandings could supply.

But the mind had been thrown from its equilibrium; the whole system was so completely unstrung and enervated, that she could not speak without weeping: and, as she sat upon the earth, listening to our entreaties with an infantine submissiveness, and striving to comply with them, the tears literally fell like rain from her eyes. She was in that state of complete dejection, and entire loss of self-control, that soon, discovering that our remonstrances, and attempted consolations only had the effect of stimulating the indulgence of this singular affection of the spirit, we conducted her to the house, and left her to the solitude of her own apartment. And thus strangely terminated, through a mysterious and inscrutable impulse of Nature, in sorrow, and in bitterness, a day, during the greater portion of which, I had experienced pre-eminent happiness.

The following morning, she had wholly regained the dominion of her feelings, and was as composed and sedate as she generally was; but, her cheerfulness had not yet returned, for the physical system was still suffering from the exhaustion and convulsion it had undergone. On the subsequent day, however, every trace of her singular affliction had entirely vanished; and she was in her happiest and gayest mood.

A week elapsed; we passed it in unalloyed pleasure. The terror to which she had been subjected, had apparently been productive of no permanent con-

sequence; she never made the slightest recurrence, or allusion to it, and we all scrupulously followed her example.

On the eighth, or ninth morning of our visit, I was sitting alone in her presence, and was abandoning my mind to the consideration of a thousand agreeable anticipations and projects. Even the retrospect of the circumstances of her recent indisposition, was now far from distressing to me; for, the more I revolved it, the more it intended to confirm me in my suspicion, I may almost say, conviction, of her reciprocation of my affection. All the events of the last few weeks served but to corroborate this judgment; it was, it seemed to me, the only, the natural, the inevitable corollary that could be derived from her conduct, notwithstanding her evasion, not her *rejection*, of my avowal of attachment.

Thus, then, I was assured of her love. But how was I to induce her to acknowledge it? Owing to some singular and unaccountable infatuation, which had obtained supreme dominion of her mind, she had, in this instance, enrolled herself in the absurd, but, very numerous, category of those, who never feel what they speak, or speak what they feel. I was, however, resolved that this self-deception should no longer continue. Yet how was I to terminate it; how persuade, or entrap her into a declaration of her affection? and I ransacked industriously not only my invention, but my memory, for a discovery of the means. I even thought, among a thousand fanciful projects, of Ovid's relation of the stratagem of Acontius.

While these reflections were passing in my mind, Œnone was regarding me poringly, with an expression of vivacity and animation, which, but that it was tempered by the extreme mildness and benignity of her nature, might almost have been called, malicious. She was seated before a table, her elbow resting upon it, and her Grecian chin supported by the rosy palm of her snow-white hand; an arch smile was on her beautiful mouth; her eyes were glistening, and she was evidently reading my heart, as though it had been bared to her view. Not a lineament of her intelligent countenance but showed most eloquently and whimsically, that she could not have been more perfectly cognizant of every thought of mine, had it been formally proclaimed to her. In this deed of moral burglary, she was as utterly lost as I was, in accumulating the matter for her plunder.

How long she had been thus clandestinely engaged, I know not, when suddenly, and accidentally raising my head, I detected her, in the very intensity of the expression which I have described. But, a brief moment, however, was I allowed to enjoy my discovery; for, speedily she observed the alteration in my countenance, which it had immediately induced. Then, the rapid interchange of a look, displayed to each, our mutual knowledge of the other's thoughts and occupations; and a smile of amusement grew on my lips, to which hers promptly responded by one of intelligent, and mirthful sympathy.

"Robber!" I said, "worst of robbers—engaged in

the pillage of the *mind*. But, you shall be sternly judged, and adequately punished."

"Do not be vindictive," she replied, in the same tone; "I plead guilty, though my booty is not a very invaluable one; it is but a sorry corroboration of that, which I previously knew."

Then, with a pencil I wrote on the margin of a book the following lines, which I requested her to read aloud.

"Juro tibi sanctæ per mystica sacra Dianæ,
Me tibi venturam comitem, sponsamque futuram."

"You are not aware, I apprehend," I said, with affected gravity, when she had concluded their perusal, "of the importance of the mysterious words you have uttered. Do you know that these two lines engraved upon an apple, and thrown into the bosom of his mistress, by an ingenious Grecian youth, obtained for him her hand? You have just sworn most sacredly, by the mysteries of the holy Diana, that you will marry me; and I, be assured, shall expect that you will not violate so solemn an oath."

But, the Christian maiden had far less regard for her involuntary promise, than the Pagan nymph; and my plagiarized stratagem had no share in the good fortune of its original inventor.

"Œnone," I said, "your disguise is useless. You know you love me; then, why have the disingenuousness to seek to conceal that, which, you are well aware, must be ultimately divulged? Confess it therefore, at once."

"Your modesty is surprising," she calmly replied.

"Nevertheless, allow me to ask *you* why, when you know the *maternal* degree of relationship that exists between us, you will still persist in seeking to establish a tie, which is consequently impracticable. If you continue this fruitless attempt, I warn you, that you will, at last, provoke me, to appoint myself your —*grandam*, your mother's *mother*."

I started at the sound of these words, as though I had been bitten by a serpent; all my good-humour instantly vanished, and my combustible blood was about to take fire: but, by a violent effort, I repressed, or rather contrived to conceal, the anger and vexation which they had excited.

When I retrace the occurrences of this brief period of my life, I scarcely know myself. Though I remember them all, with a surprising distinctness, yet, it is with difficulty, I can fancy that the stern, dark, miserable man who narrates these light incidents, was once the very individual who was the subject of them. That *I* should ever have experienced an emotion of gaiety, that *I* should ever have possessed the faculty of laughter, now seems to me an impossibility, which nothing but a minute, and progressive retrospect of the past, and of the gradual changes in my character, and disposition can controvert.

Transient, however, most transient, was the duration of this enviable period of my existence. With the anger which Œnone's self-appropriated designation engendered in me, terminated *for ever* my entertainment of that emotion of the mind, which produces

the material effect that we denominate laughter. Since then, I have experienced a few brief moments of happiness; but, they occurred, as I shall relate, during a period of bodily ailment, which prevented any ebullition of the spirits, however content and satisfied the mind might have been. From that sad hour, therefore, the capacity of joy may be said to have formed no longer a portion of my faculties.

I have stated that that very pleasantry of Œnone, which, only a few days before, had had the effect of intimidating me into a diversion from my pursuit, now only excited my ireful feelings. But, I was in a predicament somewhat dissimilar to that which I had occupied during the time of its previous occurrence; for, every hour I had grown more sanguine of success; and consequently, in proportion to the extent and strength of my hopes, was the bitterness I incurred in their disappointment. And this is the only just, but unfortunately rarely discernible, criterion by which all pretensions to forbearance and resignation, should be judged. When we feel little, when we are abundantly rich in insensibility, we are exemplarily tranquil under the imposition of misfortune; and then, some thoughtless few award to us a pre-eminence in the virtue of fortitude, when the vice of callosity has been our real protection from repining, and perhaps, rebellion, against the decrees of Providence. The disappointment of my expectations only engendered my *bitterness;* but, when the destruction of my convictions occurred, I experienced *desperation;* a fiercer pang exciting a fiercer ebullition.

Œnone discovered on my brow the red spot of anger which her speech had excited; and, perceiving that I was both seriously irritated and distressed, advanced towards me, and kindly taking my hand, said palliatingly and affectionately,

"Do not be offended by my levity, I beseech you. Heaven knows, that I little intended to pain you. But I will not again expose myself to the chance of repeating my transgressions, by any longer pretending to misunderstand you. I believe that you entertain a sincere regard for me; forgive me, however, if I say that I rather regret its existence. Be assured, that we never could be permanently happy in a union. I speak with reluctance, yet, I feel that it is my duty to express myself with a perfect unreserve. During a few brief years, our attachment *might* be reciprocal; but, you are too young to be aught to me save a friend, and I am too old to ever become your wife. With so great a discrepancy of age, I repeat, no permanency of affection could exist; and, even if I possessed in the fullest extent you can desire, the sentiments you would excite in me, I would rather wilfully perish in the effort to extirpate them, than entail irremediable misfortune upon you. Do not then be angry with me, I implore you; but summon your reason to your aid; and relinquish a pursuit, which, were I to yield to it, could only ensure the future misery of both of us. Adopt this advice for *my* sake, if not for your own; or you will compel me to leave the home of your father, and the society of your sister and yourself—of

those who are, and ever will be, most dear to me, as *friends.*"

She expressed herself with so much earnestness, and affection, that I knew not how to doubt the truth of her profession. I was thunderstruck; my blood was stagnated; I was incapable of reply.

At this moment, my sister entered the room with a countenance whereon anxiety was strongly depicted. In her hand she held a letter, which she delivered to me. Almost mechanically I commenced the perusal of it; but, the nature of its contents speedily awakened me to a consciousness of my occupation. It announced in the dryest and most laconic language, the utterly unexpected arrival of my father at our abode; his discontent at our absence, and desire of our immediate return.

Here, was matter to divert my mind from an entire indulgence of the feelings which Œnone had excited, or, at least, to suspend, for a moment, its keenest sense of dissapointment and injury. The intimation which the letter conveyed, created in us all, avowed surprise; and very probably, an equal regret, though we forbore to express it, excepting by our looks. However, the mandate we had received, was one against which there was no appeal: and, the few necessary preparations having been completed, and an affectionate farewell been interchanged between ourselves, and the fair Ianthe, her father, and sister, we immediately commenced our return.

But, under what different circumstances, and in

what different feelings, from those, of our last, was this journey performed! Œnone was the only person of the party who preserved even the appearance of serenity; and she was assiduous in her kindness, and attention to me, not only in the hope of consoling me for my present disappointment, but evidently, in the intention of obliterating from my mind, the gloomy impression which the avowal of her unfavourable sentiments had occasioned. But, I was in that state of depression, and moroseness, that all her gentle attempts to enliven, and propitiate, had rather the effect of begetting a spirit of perverseness, and of increasing my inclination to the silent indulgence of my stern, and gloomy reverie. After a short time, therefore, she desisted from her fruitless endeavours to arouse me from this moody taciturnity; and sustained a languid, and desultory conversation with my sister. At last, even this poor mockery of social communion expired; and we performed the remainder of our journey, not only in the character, but in the spirit of a cavalcade of *sincere* mourners: and, under this aspect, and in these feelings, did we return to my native, and paternal abode.

When we encountered my father, as I expected, he made no allusion to our absence; but he was more than ever dry, brief, and abrupt, in his intercourse with us all, especially with me. He never spoke to me, save when he was compelled by some selfish motive; and even then, he gazed studiously in a contrary direction, as though he thought to show me, with all possible contumely, that he was resolved to devote to a commu-

nion with me, not one more of his senses, than his own necessities imperiously required.

At first, we could not discover the cause of his sudden return; but, at last, we accidentally ascertained from a domestic engaged in assisting him in the arrangement of some of his scientific instruments, that a remarkable eclipse of the sun was expected almost immediately to occur; and that he had learned in the metropolis, or his own astronomical knowledge had acquainted him, that it would appear to the greatest advantage in his own part of the country. In this characteristic object existed, I believe, the sole cause of his abrupt, and most undesired curtailment of the intended period of his absence.

Several days elapsed. With my cousin, my conduct partook of the churlish, and sullen character of my father's to me. She sustained it however, with unaltered amiability; and made many kind efforts to effect a reconciliation between us. Yet, though I was delighted by the consciousness of the feelings which this pacific course implied her to possess, I was in that strange state of headlong perversity, that I could not compel myself to suffer her to see the satisfaction which it caused me to experience. My love for her was even, if possible, increased by these touching proofs of the imperturbable sweetness, and goodness of her disposition; yet, such was the unhappy defects of my temper, that I would rather have perished than have confessed, at this period, that I entertained for her a particle of affection. Such, indeed, was the pitiable and scarcely credible extent of my peevish infirmity,

that, not only could I never induce myself to speak kindly to the poor fawn, in her presence, but I frequently drove it from me, with the harshest threats; though, when she was absent, I availed myself of every moment to exhibit to it, in a thousand playful dalliances, all the fondness of an attachment, which was really augmented, by that very necessity of concealment, which my own self-tormenting churlishness occasionally imposed upon me.

Time still proceeded; and my sufferings beneath the moody sorry course I was pursuing, hourly increased; but, in the same proportion increased the difficulties of terminating them. Œnone was too good; too morally exalted, to ever descend to the ignominy of entertaining a feeling of rancour, or petulance; but, she possessed a becoming share of necessary pride, and self-respect; and, conscious that she had made every effort to propitiate me, she gradually withdrew from the hopeless and ungrateful task. Not that she manifested either coldness, or reserve; but she no longer sought my society with an equal assiduity, or gave me the frequent opportunities of insensibly returning to a pacific intercourse, without comment, or explanation; which, at first, she had so repeatedly afforded me. Thus therefore, the likelihood of a speedy reconciliation between us, appeared to be considerably diminished; for, though I could not conquer my weakness, I was yet well aware of its existence; and I felt that many, many a long day might elapse, before I should be able to attain the manly courage to acknowledge my error, and demand forgiveness for its commission.

Yet, this now seemed to be the only mode of restoring me and my fair kinswoman, to our past state of familiarity, and friendship.

In these feelings, and in the gloomy prospect of their continuance, my life became wretched. Ceaselessly I revolved in my mind every possible mode, except the right one, *concession*, of terminating an estrangement that was the bane of my existence. I would have given the world to have been able to have suddenly conferred upon her, some overwhelming favour; some benefit so mighty, so irresistible, that it should have compelled her, in spite of all her doubts of her reception, to rush into my arms, and to sob her gratitude on my breast. Oh then, how I would have received her! how I would have pressed her to my heart! mingled my tears with hers—humbled myself before her—adored her! worshipped her!

One day, one memorable day, in the fullest indulgence of reflections of this nature, I was returning from a long and solitary excursion in our wild district. I had been minutely reviewing every event connected with Œnone, which had occurred since her arrival in our abode. But, the principal subject of my consideration was, the mode of re-establishing our former amity. I could not bend to her; how then, should I contrive to make her bend to me? an event which I no longer desired, as a concesssion, an idle homage to my miserable vanity, but simply as a means of effecting a reconciliation between us; for *now*, if she would have made but the slightest advance, manifested the least indication of a wish for the restoration

of our friendship I, should have instantly availed myself of it, discarded all my haughty and forbidding reserve; and returned immediately to the cordial manifestation of those affectionate, and passionate, nay, almost *idolatrous*, sentiments, the continued suppression of which had become a burden, and a real torture to me.

While I was striving to imagine by what mean this most desirable object was to be attained, I became conscious that darkness was gradually growing upon the face of the earth. Every moment it became deeper and deeper; and there was in it, and in that portion of the sky, which I could behold from the deep glen wherein I was buried, a peculiar, and ominous character, that seemed to indicate the approach of some natural convulsion.

Instantly, the wildest thoughts took possession of my mind. The heavy obscurity, and the leading features of the atmospherical phenomena, were not those of an impending thunder-storm, however violent: but, I could not determine what they portended. Perchance, an earthquake? perhaps, one general eruption of our mineral, and volcanic district? Oh, would that these calamities would occur! was the passionate wish of the inmost recesses of my heart!—What cared I for any evil that might befall the whole earth, provided I could accomplish my dearest desires by preserving the life of Œnone; and thus, obtain, through her gratitude, not only the restoration of our former amity, but the possession of her hand: for, how could she refuse aught to him who should have attained the ines-

timable happiness of rescuing her from an impending, and horrible death?—Oh, how I prayed, in the intense, and loathsome selfishness of my nature, and as devoutly as though I had been instigated by some exemplarily just purpose, that Providence would hasten to grant the fulfilment of this diobolical desire!

Darker, and darker grew the heavens; and each moment my thoughts became more in unison with their aspect. The birds flew coweringly, and shriekingly, within a few feet of the surface of the earth; the wild animals either retreated slowly, casting around them wistful, and anxious glances, or fled in fleet terror to their lairs; and the owls, and all the other foul revellers of the night emerged from their noisome hiding-places. But my reflections were diverted into another channel, when on emerging from the defile, and entering upon the open plain, I discovered the cause of this mysterious change in the face of nature. That eclipse of the sun, which my father had foreseen, had occurred. The whole appearance of the dark vault above me, was sublimely solemn, and impressive. The disfigured, yet still mighty, and majestic, luminary looked fierce, and portentous; and there was a depth of silence, and stilness, in the air, that sat like a garment, upon the spirit. Some few lambent, and discoloured rays of fitful light still pervaded the atmosphere; as though just a sufficiency had been permitted to remain, to display in the fullest oppressiveness of its awful gloom, the thick, black menacing veil, that lay, almost palpably, across the pure, and shrinking empyream.

Even with that darkness which arises in the regular operations of Nature, there is always united something of the vague, and the apprehensive; it is a mysterious, and solemn, and stern Power, to the influence whereof, few care to resign themselves voluntarily; and rarely does it attain them, in their homes, and on their couches, but, it compels the most vigorous intellects, to acknowledge the enervating influence of its assaults. In his dread of this insidious dominion, by the artifice of his hand, and the ingenuity of his mind, man has learned to protect himself from its approach; for, it is an enemy with which he cannot cope; invincible in its invisibility, and in its qualities of ether, the shrinking, and gross faculties of the merely material being tremblingly admit that they can neither sustain, nor repel, the attack which they cannot discern.

These are the effects of the natural and habitual recurrences of this mighty Power. But, in those irregular and eccentric extinctions of the great luminary of the earth, on one of which I then gazed, there is an awe, a majesty, a fearful manifestation of the precariousness of our condition, of our utter dependence on the will of a regulating Omnipotence, which is oppressive, annihilating; and tramples, withers us, into an instantaneous conviction of our insect-like insignificance. And yet, with all this sense of worthlessness, and insecurity, there combines an almost equal share of exaltation and excitement. Such a spectacle presents a stirring reminiscence to the torpid mind, of the unconscious, but iron slavery of habit and inherent prejudice; lifts it from the material to the subtile,

from the earth, and the things that are of it, to the sky: and, freeing it, from its usual narrow confines, sends it to speculate, for one brief moment, in the vast liberty of the unbounded universe, of that stupendous system of worlds, whereof our own poor ball constitutes comparatively but a scarcely perceptible portion!

Even the very apprehensions, thrilling as they are, which such a sight as this suggests, yet, partake of grandeur, and dignity. Every moment as I gazed, I seemed to anticipate some supernatural result; some sundering of the celestial vault, and dazzling manifestation of the might, majesty, and glory of its Ruler. And I thought on the magnificent picture of the Psalmist; "He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and it was dark under his feet. He rode upon the cherubim, and did fly: he came flying upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him: with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him." So majestic and stupendous is this theme, that it inspired even a silly and feeble writer to imagine the following noble line; The Lord descended from above,

"And underneath his feet, he cast the darkness of the sky."

How infinitely superior is indeed this power, to that of the most glorious light, in exciting ideas of surpassing grandeur and dignity, and feelings of awe and veneration. The image of an omnipotent Being wrapt "in *dark* water and thick clouds," is, perhaps, the mightiest that the human mind can entertain.

While these reflections, and a countless number of

a similar character, occupied me, the sun had undergone its greatest obscuration, and the heavens were gradually and slowly becoming brighter.

My meditations, however, had not prevented me from pursuing my return to my home; and I had reached the draw-bridge that connected the little island whereon our house stood, with the main land, before I was even conscious that I had been continuing my walk. Over this unsteady, but not apparently insecure support, I was loiteringly advancing, when I discovered my father seated upon the terrace before the entrance gate; intently occupied in his astronomical observations, and so situated that I could not obtain ingress without passing close to him. Always entertaining an habitual reluctance to approach him, and never subjecting myself to this infliction, but upon compulsion, I mechanically folded my arms, and resting them upon the iron balusters of the bridge, renewed my observation of the celestial phenomena around me; resolved, though scarcely consciously, to patiently maintain my present situation, until he should have departed from that which he occupied.

Suspended thus, between the dark lake, and the dark heavens, but at very unequal distances, for the bridge rose only a few inches above the surface of the water, again I unreservedly abandoned myself to my reveries. The sun had assumed the form of a fiery crescent of a hue so deep and red, that I could only compare it to that of blood. In the upper sky, slowly and majestically sailed a few orange-coloured, glowing and nebulous vapours; and, in the lower air, lay

a thick, black, portentous cloud, apparently charged with thunder, which gradually descended, until a portion of it hung like a bird of prey impending over our mansion.

But, my attention was principally directed to the contemplation of the phenomena of the higher regions. A thousand superstitious fancies suddenly arose within me; and I thought, "Can my fate be connected with this irregularity of Nature? Can it be intended to convey to me, the career which I myself shall run? Over the earth, and the things that are of it, the heavens notoriously exercise an unbounded influence; even the winds and the tides are obedient to them. Why then should man, save in the vanity and fallacy of his reason, suppose himself independent on so mighty and general a dominion?—I entertain no such impious skepticism; I believe that this striking spectacle is exhibited to me as a manifestation of my fortune; and, if I should be so arrogant, or so blind, as to reject the knowledge it offers me, I contemn the mercy of heaven, and render myself morally responsible for my own probable destruction."

And I added, aloud,

"Inscrutable and mysterious power! subtle spirit, whose agency I have felt pervading my existence, since the hour I became a sentient being, in you, these thoughts originate: and I will not neglect your instigation. I will accept, therefore, as an emblem of my future, the fate of yon bright cloud, which is now so gaily progressing in the direction of the sun. If it pass it, I will believe myself born to prosper; but, if

it encounter extinction in that fierce ocean of fire, I swear to resign myself, without repining, or reproach, to any lot that may be adjudged to me. Yes, on the issue of its course, I voluntarily stake my destiny; and I bind myself," and I uttered fervently, the most solemn adjurations that mortal can employ, "to accept it as the arbiter of my fortune, whether for weal or wo, good or evil, here, and hereafter!—Sail then, cautiously, emblem of my fate; for, flimsy as you are, you are freighted with the irrevocable disposition of my future!"

And speedily was that future decided which, in the superstition and infirmity of my heart, I had solemnly and profanely made dependent upon the course of a vapour. For a few moments, I watched it, with an intense anxiety: at first, it seemed as though it would have escaped the apprehended danger; but, suddenly changing its direction, it arrived within the influence of the sun; and, with a feeling of desperation, which I cannot express, I beheld it rapidly disappear beneath the power of its rays!

At this moment, a soft voice at my side, said,

"How intently you are occupied; I have been standing here for many minutes, yet you will not deign to regard me."

Full well I knew the tones of that dear, and gentle voice; yet, even before I could turn to reply to her, even before I could move, scarcely think, a vivid flash of light surrounded me. I seemed to myself to be enveloped in flame; I felt as though my entire being had received a universal blow; the iron balusters upon

which I rested, yielded beneath me; and I fell headlong into the water. Instantly, I rose to the surface; I retained my senses, but I found that I had no power of motion. My whole frame could not have been more rigid had it been carved in granite; and though within the distance of only a few inches of the bridge, I possessed not the capability of raising my arm to prevent myself from sinking.

Then, had my destiny terminated; then, had I perished a comparatively innocent man, but for the fatal interposition of my cousin. With a presence of mind, a decision, and a promptitude which I could never have expected to have existed in one so gentle, she sustained me above the surface of the water, while, with piercing cries, she summoned assistance. Never shall I lose the most vivid recollection of the minutest incidents of that moment! Though I was enduring severe corporeal pain, I retained a perfect possession of all the faculties of my mind; and while a fragment of this wretched frame survives, I shall not forget the pleasure, the thrill of satisfaction, I derived, even in that moment of danger, and of suffering, from the contemplation of Œnone. No words can convey the picture which she presented; the very formation of her features seemed to be radically altered, and the whole countenance expressed the intensity of horror, anxiety, sympathy, and energy. Never did human face more completely reveal the affection of the heart! I rejoiced in my peril; and, instead of regretting its occurrence, felt that I could willingly have daily exposed myself to it, for the sake of a far less reward.

When the servants, who had been collected by her cries, had extricated me from the lake, it was discovered that I was entirely deprived of the use of my limbs; was as bodily incapable, as a man that has been smitten by paralysis. Little did I think when I casually and carelessly regarded the thunder-cloud, that it was freighted with the lightning which should so speedily avenge my superstitious and impious withdrawal of my destiny from the protection of Providence, to consign it deliberately and irrevocably to the power of Chance!

Undisturbed by, or unheeding the cries of Œnone, my father still pursued his astronomical observations. As the servants bore my helpless body within the distance of a few feet of the spot which he occupied, he deigned not to cast a look upon me; but, angrily desired my supporters to proceed with greater speed, for "the tread of so many feet created a tremulousness in the earth, which imparted an oscillation to his telescope." And this was all the sympathy which a casualty that still might cause a son the loss of his life, extracted from an affectionate father!—Oh, how my blood boiled, as I heard the unfeeling mandate!

When we arrived in my chamber, it was discovered that the injuries I had sustained had been occasioned by the iron balusters of the bridge having attracted the lightning, and conveyed a portion of it into my arms, the nerves of which it had completely paralyzed. In this violent shock, the whole of my frame had so entirely sympathized, that every portion of it was deranged; and I was stretched on my bed, with little

more of the indications of vitality than the power of respiration could supply. I was utterly incapable of all motion; and could not speak in consequence of the torture which even the attempt occasioned me.

In this torpor of the body however, my mind had no share; could its action have been visible to the eye, its ceaseless activity would have formed a striking contrast to the utter lethargy of my grosser faculties. While I lay on my bed, a helpless and rigid statue, my adventurous thoughts rapidly roved through all the realms of space, and all the divisions of time. In the same moment I arrayed before me, the past, the present, and the future; I saw Œnone with the look of sorrow which she wore on the day of her first arrival at our abode. I saw her pale, and panic-stricken as she was, when we extricated her from her tomb of flowers; and I saw her, smiling, and happy, a wedded wife, straying hand in hand with me, through the rich scenery of a foreign land. The fetters of my body had quickened my spirit; and, like the saint in the Apocalypse, I seemed to look upon "the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

During the whole of the remainder of that day, my sister, and Œnone continued in my apartment; and I never ceased to recreate myself by gazing upon the latter. Her ever watchful looks of interest and affection were a source of happiness and exultation to me: and every moment, I congratulated myself on the occurrence of an accident which had not only terminated our alienation, but had evidently engendered in her, at least, the *expression* of a kinder feeling than she had

hitherto displayed, although it might have long existed latently. Then, all my fondly cherished suspicions of her sympathy in my passion, were again strengthened almost into conviction. And not in error, was this judgment formed, as the immediately ensuing pages will testify. Yes, *love* me, the fair serpent did!—Yet, heaven knows, that I have no right to attach to her this epithet of reprobation; for though had *she* not existed, *my* ruin might never have occurred, yet the fault was mine alone; and a being more immaculate than she, more devoid of error, and more rich in positive worth, never adorned this imperfect earth.

The poor fawn too, was an attendant in my sick chamber. Oh, how I loved the fond animal! It seemed, and I firmly believe that it was, conscious of my suffering; and it fixed its beautiful eyes upon me, with an unwavering pertinacity, and a sorrowful gentleness of expression, which could only have arisen in its sympathy, and in an instinctive comprehension of my subjection to some affliction. When my countenance occasionally denoted a peculiarly strong impulse of attachment to it, Œnone would arise, and tenderly embrace it; but though it seemed far from insensible to these endearments, it never once averted its looks from me.

On the following day, I was still in a state of bodily incapacity; on the ensuing, however, the power of speech had entirely returned to me. My sister had left the chamber; and Œnone alone was sitting by the side of my couch, gazing on me with an expression of angel-like benignity, and goodness. Gladness too, was

on her features; it seemed to me that she was conscious of the service she had rendered me, and was triumphing in her recollection of it. I regarded her attentively: my feelings perhaps at that moment, possessed an equal degree of benevolence, and affection, but they were not wholly unmingled with the leaven of a more earthly love. I suppose that my eyes revealed the tale of my heart; for, almost imperceptibly her glances grew more tender. At last, we interchanged a look, that words cannot depict, and the entire value of which, none but the actors in this mystical communion can perfectly comprehend.

"Œnone," I said, "you love me."

She raised her head towards Heaven; her countenance flushed deeply; her bosom heaved tumultuously: for a moment, she was evidently agitated by a conflict of the most violent emotions, and she hid her face in her hands. But in another instant, she slowly raised it from its concealment; when, the crimson hue had entirely disappeared, and a marble paleness had assumed its place. The strong energy however, of excited love was on her features, and in her heart, as throwing herself on her knees by the side of my couch, she grasped my hand; and gazing on my face with an ineffable tenderness, she exclaimed in a voice thrillingly tremulous even more with the fervour, than with the timidity of passion,

"Dearly—truly—devotedly—eternally!"

The suddenness, and utter unreserve of this long desired, and long expected, yet now most startling confession, rushed upon me in a flood that was irre-

sistible. The strength of my mind succumbed to the weakness of my body; alternate fits of heat, and cold pervaded my whole frame: and for a brief moment, I became equally incapable of both speech and motion.

At length I tremulously grasped the hand of my sweet cousin, and kissed it, as fervently as my suspended vigour would permit. She was singularly pale; there was something almost spiritual in her appearance. The various mental conflicts she had endured, had subverted the usual expression of her features, and substituted one, which I had never before seen, accustomed as I was to watch minutely, all the phases of her countenance. She addressed me; and her manner was at once, solemn, and affectionate.

"Dear——" she said, "I love you; I repeat premeditatedly, the avowal which accident, and circumstance have just elicited from me; henceforth therefore, I could not, if I would, retract it. But now, that it *is* made, my fervent prayer to Heaven will ever be, that it may not conduce to the misfortune of either of us. In allowing you to discover the secret of my heart, I have acted contrary to the dictates of my reason; contrary too, to a resolution which I deemed unalterable, and which I had embraced in the apprehensions which I have already divulged to you. Yet, I believe, that, but for the exultation I experienced in having been the happy mean of preserving your precious life, and the increase of tenderness to you, which this consciousness engendered, I should always

have had the fortitude to conceal from you, an affection which *may* not promote the peace of either."

"Dearest Œnone," I said reproachfully, "surely you do not already regret your confession?"—

"Not for my own sake, so help me, Heaven!" she replied with much energy. "It is for you and you alone, that, at this instant, I entertain any apprehension. I cannot, I must repeat, forget the disparity of our years: I cannot forget that *I* shall be descending the path of life, while you will be in all the pride, and strength of its zenith. You love me now; but when I shall have paid that debt of Time, which the despot exacts as the price of existence; when that change which is the dreaded doom of all, who linger during a few brief moments, in this transitory pageant, shall have occurred in the form, and in the features, which at present, gratify your partial eye, what *then*, will be the state of your affections?"

She paused; but speedily added, with great emotion, in a sudden transport of foreboding despondency,

"Oh God! where would be my mean of self-support, of submission to thy decrees, should I ever live to feel that *he* contemns me!"

"Dear, mistrustful being!" I exclaimed reproachfully, "why thus fruitlessly, groundlessly torment yourself?—Believe me, when I swear ——"

"'No, swear not at all,'" she cried, interrupting me with great animation; "'neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool.' Perchance, we may all, occasionally, thoughtlessly adopt this culpable practice; but, I avow to you,

that I place no additional reliance upon that pledge which the self-apprehensive utterer himself considers intrinsically so weak, that it requires to be sustained the still more fragile base of a profane appeal."

I reflected a moment; and then, I replied impressively, but with less energy of manner,

"You wrong me, you wrong me, Œnone. I *have* looked into my own heart, and I affirm to you boldly, that there exists within me the power of loving you as long as my days shall endure. I speak to you, without exaggeration: I utter only my most secret and unadorned convictions."

I expressed myself deliberately, and calmly, and yet, with fervour; and so evidently was I only protesting that which I felt, that my own firm reliance in the duration of my attachment, produced a favourable change in her. In an instant, however, it passed away; and her countenance again assumed its melancholy aspect.

"How can I," she said, addressing herself more than me, "repose any trust in his youth? He only avers what he himself believes: but, what security is his present conviction against the occurrence of future change?" She regarded me for a moment, with an air of deep sadness: and then, added tenderly, and with much emotion, "Will you, will you ever be true to me?"——

My first impulse was, to reply to this question, by an indignant reproach for her want of confidence in me; my second, to avouch, in spite of her admonition, the permanency of my feelings, by adjuring the hea-

ven, the earth, and the sea, to witness to my protestations of fidelity. But, I resisted both these temptations to the indulgence of the passionate warmth which her speech had excited; and confined myself to this plain and unexaggerated answer,

"Œnone, I will love you as long as I live."

The simplicity of my reply, the faith and fervour with which it was uttered, and the suppression of the more violent emotions which her mistrust had evidently created in me, all united to produce upon her, the effect which I desired.

"I believe you," she said, "implicitly believe you; and here terminates for ever all expression of my misgivings. Yet, I will do more; I will not only never express them, but will attempt to eradicate them; and trust, and *think*, that I shall succeed. I feel that I cannot, ought not, to act otherwise: the die is cast, and I should be most ungenerous, and most weak, were I to continue to manifest apprehensions of the course which is inevitable. And now, therefore," she added, with a faint smile, making an evident effort to surmount her depression, and assume a lighter air, "your wicked Latin attempt to inveigle me, may be devoted to some use. Insidious and occult as it is, I think I yet have learning enough to enable me to repeat a portion of it, without error; but, if I fail, you must prompt me. *Juro*, I swear; *me tibi venturam comitem;* I will at once become your companion; *sponsamque futuram*, and your wife, the moment your father shall have granted us his sanction. This is my compact, and there is my hand; I now abandon it to you, as the type

of the gift of my heart; some future day, you shall take it, as the pledge of the devotion of myself."

And most faithfully did she adhere to her promise; at least, to every portion of it, of which the fulfilment depended upon herself. The change that, from this hour, occurred in her intercourse with me, was most remarkable. Instead of avowing, or intimating, that she entertained even the vestige of a doubt, she availed herself of every opportunity of displaying her utter, perfect reliance on me. Instead of any longer withholding, or disguising the extent of her affection; or even of attempting occasionally to shroud herself in the mask of restraint, she appeared to derive a pleasure from revealing to me, with an unvarying unreserve, her most secret thoughts, from abandoning to me the entire ransack of her mind. Zealously and tenderly, but indirectly, she invited me to follow a similar course; and seemed to feel a pride in intimating her belief that, in such a union as ours, though we possessed *two* beings, we ought to have but *one* heart.

It is almost impossible to express the effect which this conduct produced upon me; it won me, it fascinated, it enchanted me. I saw only with her eyes; I heard only with her ears. Matter, form, colour, aspect, space, all my perceptions of them, were equally subservient to her dominion. Not one of my senses were any longer my own; I only held them as delegates from her, to be withdrawn, or continued, excited, or suppressed, by the slightest manifestation of her will. Never, in a lover's belief, was love more sin-

cere, or more strong than mine. The power of entertaining a misgiving seemed to constitute no portion of my faculties; and I abandoned myself to my idolatry with an entire confidence. The idea of change either on her part, or on my own, never even entered into my imagination, any more than the possibility of her being really less good, and less perfect than I believed her to be. With the thorough Eastern faith of the blindest and most zealous enthusiast, I should have been unable to have discerned a flaw in my divinity, even though its existence should have been *proved* to me.

In every action, and in every feature, from the most important, to the most trivial, my mind received its tone from her. She entirely directed me in the choice of the literary subjects of my study; I wholly lost my partiality for the authors she disapproved, and, when incited by her encomium, insensibly became addicted to those whom I had previously disliked. She remodelled my taste for music; attached me, if possible, still more strongly to the works of ancient art; and stimulated me to, and aided me in, the investigation of the most exalted, and worthy objects of human consideration. We talked of the tides, the air, the earth; the changes of the seasons, the growth of plants; the fossils, the minerals, the stalactites, and the dark secrets of the boundless waters. Together, we studied, and discussed the wonders and the beauties of natural philosophy; and even pierced more than superficially into the scholastic mysteries of ethicks. Perhaps, however, our principal pleasure was to soar

into the sublimities of religion, and lose ourselves in endless conjectures of the state, constitution, and object of the past, the present, and the fearful hereafter.

And yet, unknown to myself, a singular and unfavourable change had occurred in the feelings which I entertained for her. It is true that, at this period, I experienced, if possible, even more than my former affection to her; and a more than equal admiration of her virtues, and intellectual qualities, and endowments. But, the *awe* which she had once excited in me, was irrevocably gone. I had passed a moral Rubicon; I was no longer intimidated by the apprehension of her indifference, I was no longer in unconsciousness, and in fear, of the nature of her valuation of me. That powerful dominator, and curb of an irregular, and disordered, and self-unmanageable mind, *suspense*, was withdrawn from me for ever. I knew that she loved me without bound, or limit. All the ice too, and restraint, of mutual ignorance, were entirely removed; we were thoroughly, and reciprocally familiarized; and the consequence was, that her power over me was far more seeming, than real. I can now but too clearly perceive, that, at this period, I was all that is tractable, and deferential, simply because we were both, in a certain degree, equally animated by a spirit of concession, and accommodation; and no point of difference had yet arisen between us, of sufficient importance to induce me to discard the habit of submission, and hostilely assert the selfish freedom of thought and action, which I really, though latently, and unconsciously, entertained. Had I then possessed

only a tithe of the self-knowledge, which I have subsequently acquired, I might probably have averted the danger to which this state of mind was likely to expose me.

Never let the woman who would maintain the dominion of her lover, allow him to be *secure* of the possession of her affection: award him an alternation of kindness, and coldness, and let him *doubt* through a life of consequent homage, and assiduity.

But, I am now anticipating the progress of events. For many weeks I was stretched upon my couch, in a state of bodily incapacity; and during this period occurred all that intercourse between me and Œnone, to which I have alluded. I suffered no pain sufficient to prevent me from enjoying her society; and consequently, though deprived of all the pure pleasures arising in a contact and communion with Nature, and of that bodily robustness and flow of spirit which were promoted by the violent exercises to which I was addicted, yet my life was one of almost unalloyed happiness; so great a gratification did I derive, not only from the converse of Œnone, but from the ceaseless, and affectionate attentions which my state afforded her the opportunity of devoting to me.

One day, the little Ianthe, and her father, having heard of my illness, arrived at our house, for the purpose of visiting me. The former brought with her a large bunch of flowers, the most beautiful posy which the declining season would enable her to form. Who has not experienced the wonderful acuteness which long-continued indisposition imparts to all the facul-

ties, and to none so much as to the sense of smell? Whoever is unacquainted with this change, has certainly and fortunately avoided the pain of the cause, but he has lost a consequent pleasure which is almost divine.

I reyelled even in the sight of the flowers; but, there are no words which can express the delight which their scent occasioned me. It inspired me with a sensation which I can only describe as an intellectual drunkenness; a faintness, a sickness, a bewilderment, which instead of partaking of the nature of similar affections of the body, only pervaded my whole being with the feeling that I was *sinking* into heaven.

When I recovered from this entrancing tumult of the senses, the restraint which had been imposed upon Ianthe was removed; and she was suffered to fly into my arms. Then, was manifested a curious and interesting picture of the jealousy of animals. The fawn had often evinced slight symptoms of dissatisfaction, even when my sister caressed me; but, they were so little defined, that one rather imagined, than distinguished the cause; its discontent was evident, yet we could not exactly decide what had occasioned it. In the present case, however, there was no possibility of doubting; for, whether the animal found itself additionally excited in consequence of these familiarities being indulged by a stranger; or, whether it conceived that Ianthe's extreme youth, and shortness of stature, reduced her more to a level with its own scale, and removed all necessity for restraint, I cannot determine; but, I do know that it seized her by her gar-

ment, and attempted to drag her from the side of the couch, all the while uttering a cry, which was so strongly indicative of extreme grief, that it was quite touching.

We extricated the timid child from the grasp of its harmless assailant; but the instant that she re-approached me, it again flew to the charge, whining even more piteously than before. Again she was emancipated; when with its wonderful activity, leaping over the entire person of my sister, as she sat on the other side of the couch, the jealous animal alighted close to me. Then, forcibly nestling itself beneath the incumbent clothes, and hiding its face in the garments of my breast, it eagerly and beseechingly attempted by every possible mode, to direct my caresses to itself.

This little dramatic scene was delightful to Œnone: and, when Ianthe had departed, she lavished upon her beautiful favourite, a profusion of the most affectionate endearments; so pleased was she that it should have manifested such an extreme attachment to me.

I must not forget to mention one other circumstance which befell on this day; as it was the only instance which occurred of Œnone departing from her self-imposed promise of never recurring to her apprehensions.

I was intently gazing upon her; in one hand, I grasped the flowers, and the other I was lightly passing, and re-passing, over the velvet surface of her face. While engaged in this dalliance, I said;

"You belong far less to our race, than to the king-

dom of Nature. There is nothing on earth to which I can so justly compare you as to a beautiful flower. It is a perfect resemblance of your body, and as perfect a type of the purity of your mind. And yet, I almost wrong you; for, where is the floral leaf that can present ramifications to vie with those of these veins and arteries?—The 'lilies of the valley are clothed in their glory;' but, bright and wondrous as they are, this form is of a purer fabric; this face has a softer, more orient integument."

"None can deny," she replied smilingly, "that you possess a courtier's tongue, if not a lover's heart. And yet," she added with a sigh, after a momentary pause, "if I am a flower, it must be admitted that I have attained the very fulness of my bloom. The next stage, therefore, must be one of declension; and the hour *may* come, when *you* shall deem me less fit to be exhibited in a vase, than registered in a herbal."

To this speech I made no reply; it was the first, and the last, breach of her promise; and consequently, though it displeased me, I allowed it to pass without observation.

At length, I completely recovered; and I was restored to the habits, and the predilections of my youth, and of my strength. Now, however, within my inmost mind, grew an anxiety, which had, for some time, latently existed; but, as the necessity of ascertaining whether there was any just cause for the entertainment of it, gradually drew more near, my sufferings proportionately increased. Strive as I would, I could not

disguise from myself the possibility of my father refusing his concurrence to my union with my cousin. In vain, I assured myself, and truly, that there was no reasonable obstacle to its fulfilment, that he could find no equitable plea for withholding his sanction. Still I felt most acutely that his prohibition, though not very probable, was yet far from impossible; for, I had always lurking within me, a kind of obscure, and mysterious apprehension of the extent of his perversity, and of the antipathy to me which he appeared lately to have conceived.

Coupled with this gloomy augury, was ever present the corresponding thought, What will Œnone do, how will she act, if my stern, and arbitrary parent should adopt this tyrannic course? I feared to answer to myself the question; and invariably, when I arrived at this stage of my meditation, I desperately closed my eyes against any farther investigation of the probable disposition of my future fate.

Several times, I commenced a conversation with my cousin on this subject; in the endeavour to learn the exact nature of the sentiments she would be likely to entertain, in the event of the being who possessed the baneful power of determinating a fellow-mortal's destiny, proving inimical to our union. Too speedily, however, I found, that her opinions agreed but little with mine; and that she still maintained an almost unlimited notion of the extent of paternal control. Yet, she had no idea that it was even possible that my father could withhold his sanction; and strenuously reiterated, when I revealed a portion of my ominous

fears, her conviction that they would prove to be utterly unfounded.

I could not however, be so easily persuaded into security; a misgiving had radicated itself in my mind, which was not to be extirpated by the most potent efforts of either my hopes, or my reason. Dark, and sinister forebodings became habitual to me; and, like the fatalist, I seemed to feel as though I were under the dominion of some dread and irresistible power. A weight was upon my spirit; from which I could not extricate it; and misfortune itself could not have subjugated me so much, as did my present apprehensions of its occurrence.

At last, in the hope of mitigating my fears of the result I expected from an application to my father, I resolved to learn unequivocally from Œnone, the course she would adopt, in the event of his refusal of his sanction.

"You ask me," she replied, after I had several times urgently addressed this question to her, "to do that which is most painful to me, because I am aware, that it will be displeasing to you. You know how I love you, how sincerely, how heart-dearly! You may conceive, therefore, that I cannot tell you without reluctance, that nothing should ever induce me to unite myself to you, without your father's concurrence. Where I less mature, perhaps, I might have determined differently; but worlds should not bribe me to give you a wife of my years, unless he most unequivocally consented to receive me as his daughter. Think you, that I could live and bear from *him*, the imputation

of having inveigled his youthful and thoughtless son, into an incongenial, dissentious marriage?—Think you, that aught that is mortal could induce me ever to expose myself to the *chance* of enduring this ignominy? No—no—I hope and believe, that unsupported, my principles, and sense of rectitude, would have sustained me in the adoption of a course which I *know* but too well is the only proper one; combined, however, with my feelings of, I trust, becoming pride, and self-respect, they are invincible, and neither the sophistry, nor the prayers, of the united world could shake them. I express myself with this decision, because I am, I will own, grieved, that you should have deemed me capable of acting a part so ignoble as that which you would assign to me, in the event of his rejection of my qualifications as a wife for his son. Oh, how much you have wronged me! if indeed, you could ever have *really* thought that *I* would be, at once, so vain, and so debased, as to esteem myself justified in accepting your hand, when *he* should have pronounced me ineligible. But pray let us dwell no more upon this painful theme, the discussion of which is, I hope utterly supererogatory; for I cannot think, that my own mother's brother will withhold his sanction to his son's union with his niece, when you please to solicit it."

This positive declaration of her principles, and determination, only produced upon me the effect of augmenting my depression, and gloomy auguries. I could now entertain no hope but in the concurrence of my father: for, from Œnone's manner, even more than from her professions unequivocal as they were, I

drew the conviction that she was immutable in her decision; and that, as she had implied, neither *my* sophistry, nor *my* prayers, would ever succeed in bending her to the adoption of a course which she herself felt to be unworthy.

Now, therefore, still darker grew the horizon of my future. Frequently I could not forbear from endeavouring to depict to myself what would be my fate in the event of my father's opposition to our union. These thoughts filled me with horror; and slowly, and insidiously the demon of malignity crept into the crevices of my mind. I felt suddenly inspired by the darkest impulses; of the origin of which I was not conscious, but seemed to myself a passive agent in the hands of an external and irresistible power.

At length, resolved to terminate the dreadful, and morally pernicious agony which suspense occasioned me, I debated with my sister, respecting the adoption of the course which would be most likely to ensure success. After a thorough investigation of the subject, I determined, in concurrence with her advice, that *she* should make my petition to my father; but, that she should delay the communication of it until she should find him in a mood which she might deem propitious.

Day after day elapsed; my poor Marion could obtain no favourable opportunity of introducing my supplication. My father now never for an instant unbent even to her, from the causticity and laconism of his manner; and my anxiety, and ominous terrors increased to an extent that was insupportable.

At length, I formally told my sister, that I would sustain my present state no longer; that I was resolved to know the worst; and authorized her to proceed immediately to the stern object of my fears, and learn his decision. The moment she had departed on this mission, I went in quest of Œnone, and communicating to her the important step I had taken, awaited with her, in dismay ineffable, the all-decisive result. Oh, never, were this feeble frame of mine, to endure for a thousand years, should I forget the agony of those moments of suspense!

They were however, but too soon determined. My sister entered. Her countenance was pale; and denoted both grief, and agitation. I felt at once, the tale she had to tell me; and my soul sank within me. In that instant, my whole nature was permanently changed; and the bitterness, and the daring, and the recklessness of despair seized on my prostrate mind.

In the midst of all my own suffering, I could still retain a perception of the conduct of Œnone. She said little; but her varying colour revealed the agony she was enduring. At last, making a violent effort to regain her self-control, she asked my speechless, and agitated sister to detail to her the particulars of the interview. The kind girl hesitated for a moment, and then replied,

"I believe, I shall act most wisely in not deceiving you; I cannot but think that there would be both folly and cruelty in raising hopes which must be ultimately crushed, and could only be productive of the effect of prolonging your sufferings, during a few more anxious

days. Miserable therefore, most miserable, as is to me, the necessity of afflicting two beings both of whom, are so incomparably dear to me, I feel myself compelled equally by my reason, and a respect for truth, to comply so far with your request, as to give you an accurate statement of the result of our conversation. It was so brief, that I could repeat to you, every word that fell from him; but, it is only incumbent upon me to acquaint you, that he refused his consent in a manner which convinces me, and I say it with ineffable pain, that he will never be induced to alter his decision. I requested him mildly, yet firmly, to assign me a reason for his antipathy to your marriage, that I might report it to you, as some mitigation of the pang which his decree would inflict; but, he peremptorily refused, and sternly desired me to quit the apartment. Therefore, my dear Œnone," added the weeping and affectionate girl, "and my dearest brother, you must at once, and for ever, I fear, abandon all hope of being enabled to induce my father to consent to your union."

I was shocked, stunned, by this intelligence, I knew not what reply to make; I felt as though my heart were breaking; I gazed speechlessly and dully upon Œnone and my sister; and, conscious at last, that my present state was not one in which I could discuss with the slightest hope of advantage, the adoption of any course, I withdrew hastily from the room.

Several days elapsed; and I continued in an equal state of stupour, and unresolve. Œnone too, I could

see suffered acutely; but, as the diamond requires the imperfect light of art to elicit the beauties which are latent during the day, so she, during this her twilight of existence, exhibited a lustre, which those who had only superficially observed her, in her hours of prosperity, could never have supposed her to possess. Hers, was the conduct of an angel; in the midst of her own deep grief, she seemed to think only of mine; and preached to me resignation, patience, and submission, with a self-command, a spirit of forgiveness, and a rectitude, that appeared to me even more than mortal.

Like however, the lofty and stately pine that, requiring but another blow of the axe, to sever its last hold on its root, sways to and fro, this way and that, without any certain support, I rocked morally, unsustained by any settled purpose. What course to adopt I knew not; but, I *did* know that obedience to my father's decree, was not in my nature. I listened to the words of Œnone; they fell upon my ear; but they made no impression upon my heart: and while she, angel-like, was inculcating charity and peace, I, demon-like, was brooding over the darkest dreams of strife, and retribution.

I no longer sought her society; the faculty of entertaining happiness had departed from my breast. I could only ruminate upon my wrongs, and devote my mind to the consideration of the mode of either terminating or avenging them. The indecision of my conduct principally arose in the doubt of the party to which I should first address my efforts to induce an

abandonment of those intentions which, if maintained, I *felt* would prove my destruction. Whether, however, my cousin, or my father, was more likely to yield to my persuasions, and entreaties, I could not determine: in my inmost heart, I had little hope of the concession of either.

And this, was the fatal apprehension that filled me with every evil thought. Nevertheless, my selfishness protected me from a knowledge, or even a suspicion of my own iniquity. I regarded myself only as a man grievously, incomparably wronged. I vividly depicted to myself the happiness, the career of bliss, I should have possessed, but for the obstacles wantonly interposed by others; and then, turning to the future of darkness that was now before me, I cursed them as my oppressors, and myself, as their victim.

And yet, though I did not deem myself guilty in entertaining them, I could not but be conscious that a vast change had occurred in the nature of my thoughts. I felt myself perpetually engaged in the meditation of evil; I felt that strife was now the sole occupant of a heart, that had so long been the abode of comparative tranquillity, and virtue. Still, this consciousness of the vice of my mind, instead of stimulating me to attempt the correction of it, only inspired me with additional sentiments of hostility to those, who had occasioned the self-tormenting alteration. For, I scarcely need repeat, that I was one of those unfortunates, who being endowed with a strong and quick perception of the faults of others, have yet, neither eye, nor sense,

by which they can accurately detect the existence of their own.

In brief, although blind to my own state, and condition, I was, nevertheless, *a bad man.* Why God creates such beings, human reason can no more explain, than why a mother occasionally produces a sightless, or a speechless babe. My mind was naturally as defective as is the infant's frame when thus bereaved; and occasionally, I was not more devoid of the power of withstanding its impulses, than the child would be of supplying itself with an eye, or a tongue. Yet, the thoughtless many will not receive this creed, simply because *my* malady is not palpable to their bodily vision.

A *diseased mind;* we think of, and even look upon it, without emotion; while the sight of a diseased organ, or even a waxen representation of it, fills us with horror and disgust. Such is the crude quality of the human intellect, that, of the immaterial and the subtile, the all-pervading, but the invisible, it possesses no adequate power of estimation. But could the diseased mind be incarnated, invested with an appropriate hue and form!—How many a phlegmatic old crone would be scared into sudden activity by the countenance of her most familiar gossip! how many a fair young form would assume the aspect of a fiend!

It must not, however, be supposed that, because I have represented myself as regarding Œnone as one of my oppressors, I always entertained towards her sentiments of anger. Instead of habitually possessing any such feeling, I loved her with an idolatry that was,

if possible, increased, and increasing; otherwise, where would have been the source of the pangs I was enduring. Had my affection for her abated, I could not have been maddened by the mere fear of her loss. It was my father, who was the principal, indeed the sole, object of my wrath; until, feeling the almost certain impossibility of ever being enabled to persuade him into a retractation of his prohibition, my mind naturally addressed itself to her, and to the happiness which would still be my lot, if, like me, she would laugh at, and defy his authority. Then only, when I had despairingly examined my chance of influencing her into a departure from her principles, a sentiment of anger to her, took possession of my mind. I could not refrain from repeatedly reflecting that, by the sacrifice of a mere chimera, a fanciful feeling of morbidly sensitive honour, she could ensure my eternal happiness; and these, and corresponding opinions, I pertinaciously revolved, until I had wrought myself into a violent, but transient fit of indignation against her. Before, however, the following morning, it had totally disappeared; and my father again became the sole object of my hostility; when my mind underwent a rotation of feeling almost precisely similar to that of the previous day.

Thus passed a brief period; during which, the only self-knowledge I attained was, that, happen what might, oppose all who would and could, within me, existed not the power of resigning Œnone. She was mine, by her own avowal; she had abandoned her

heart to me; and the united world should not compel me to relinquish her gift.

While these, and thoughts of equal disquietude, possessed the dominion of my mind, I used to wander about the house, under the curse of ceaseless restlessness. Yet, there was one spot which possessed a strange and mysterious charm for me; a charm which, alas, my subsequent experience has enabled me but too well to comprehend. At the time of its existence, however, its nature was an enigma to me; I felt its impulse, and I obeyed it; but, I dreamt not of examining the cause. Perhaps, though unconsciously, *I dared not.*

The spot that thus attracted me, was a small chamber which contained a portion of my father's collection of ancient, and foreign arms. Among these might be seen almost every variety of the means which the ingenious malignity of man has contrived for the increased curtailment of this already sufficiently brief existence. Here, the most fastidious might please himself in the fashion of the aperture which should admit the passage of the icy hand that having once seized never resigns its prey: convex, concave, oblong, round, or square, the discontented with Memory, might carve an entrance for Oblivion, in any form his phantasy might affect.

To this room, I loved to resort; for, though I knew not why, I derived a strange satisfaction from the contemplation of the weapons it contained. Before me, they glittered in almost boundless dissimilitude; fal-

chions, daggers, scimitars, axes, lances, maces; not one species was omitted of the arms of offence, of either the East, or the West, in both the ancient and feudal times. The greater number of them too, were in an admirable state of preservation; and, in whatever portion of the chamber I stationed myself, the rays of light and life, were returned to me gaily, gaudily, dancingly by the implements of Death. It was indeed, a strange, and perhaps, unequalled collection; and could not have failed to have strikingly impressed the philosophical observer with a gloomy and painful consciousness of the vast extent, and prevalence of the sanguinary features of the human character.

Among this large assemblage of destructive instruments, two especially excited my attention. The one, was a dagger, about eighteen inches in length, of a serpentine form, resembling that, which the angel Gabriel is supposed to hold before the gates of Paradise. This dagger was believed to have belonged to one of the *Old Men of the Mountain;* by which name were distinguished the Chiefs of the Assassiniens, or Arsacidæ, a colony of murderers that inhabited a few towns in the vicinity of the ancient Tyre. A more perilous weapon could never have been shaped.

The other object of my admiration was also, I imagine, of Oriental origin. It was an axe of a singular keenness of edge. One of its blades was falcated; the converse blade which sprang out of the back of the handle, was almost pyramidal; and was so sharp, and dazzlingly bright, was so evidently formed for massacre, it seemed to my disordered imagination, almost ca-

pable of spontaneously burying itself in the skull of an opponent. A more formidable instrument of destruction cannot even be conceived; and while I brandished it menacingly in the air, I felt as though the lives of the whole of mankind were dependent on my mercy.

As I have said, I knew not why, but I derived a strange pleasure from the inspection, and touch of these barbarous weapons. I especially remember the feelings which they engendered on one particular morning: I was handling the Assassinien dagger; I was considering it in all points of view; and, as I lightly drew my finger over its biting edge, I thought that *if* a man possessed a mortal foe, he might be tempted to regard it as his surest friend. And then, I could not refrain from depicting to myself, the savage, the intense, exultation which he, who had been irremediably wronged, would experience in driving such a weapon as this, into the heart of his oppressor. And as the picture vividly presented itself to my excited imagination, I raised my arm to its fullest extent in the air; and then quickly and violently lowered it, in the mimic action of a resentful man stabbing his most detested adversary.

At this moment, I discerned Œnone, standing on the threshold of the chamber; but, I was too much irritated both by a sullen and ever present sense of my wrongs, and by the delusion of my fictitious deed of retribution, to feel the shame which her detection of me in the indulgence of such a puerile ebullition of fruitless malignity, might, at another period, have occasioned. I suppose the scowl, which the rancour,

and wrath of my heart had begotten, still remained upon my brow; for, she advanced into the interior of the apartment, and said;

"In the name of heaven, deform not your countenance by that dire and loathsome expression. If you love me, banish it for ever; or you will render me afraid to approach you. It imparts to you a resemblance to that horrible object of your admiration, the fearful Medusa, which, I confess, *grieves*, even more than it terrifies me."

"And think you, I replied, "this resemblance occasions me any regret? Mistaking Œnone!—Believe me I glory in it!—And let my oppressors beware, or by the God of heaven, they shall find that *my actions* can be in perfect unison with the expression of that fell countenance, even though it were a hundred fold more atrocious!"—

"Oh, address not this language to me, I implore you!" she replied with much animation. "What have I done? How have I deserved it? Repeat to me my aggression. Ingrate! ask your own heart, whether my sole offence has not been the entertainment of a too passionate love for you!"

"*Impassioned* indeed!" I scornfully rejoined; "abuse not, dishonour not the term by applying it to the timid, apathetic, selfish course you have adopted. Where is the passion in sacrificing me to the dainty principles of an ideal duty? Where is the passion in destroying my peace, to pander slavishly, abjectly, to the imperiousness of a stern, unnatural, and unjust father?—Deceive not yourself; the contest is between

your *supposed* love of me, and those *real* prejudices, which *you* denominate principles. You have placed these two antagonists in a scale: and your presence here, at this moment, too emphatically expresses which has preponderated. You have wealth; I have none: you are independent on all the world; *I* am dependent upon you, and on my father. Then, if I, for your sake, and in the strength of a perfect love, deem existence on your support, no degradation to me, by what right do *you* pretend to cancel our bond of affection—*you*, in whom exclusively resides the power of fulfilling it?—We have interchanged our faith; I am yours; you are mine; and only the united will of both can mar the compact, which neither could alone have made. I tell you, this moment is pregnant with the decision of our eternal fate; and now, therefore, I solemnly claim you, as my possession; and *demand* you to fly with me, from this accursed spot, to one, where no imperious parent can arise to oppose the celebration of our union."

"Heaven knows my heart!" she exclaimed fervently; "heaven knows my love for you!—how willingly I would reply to you, in the beautiful words of the gentle Ruth; 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.'—Oh, that I could return to you this answer! But, the power has perished, though the wish, alas for *my* peace, exists in even an augmented strength. My pledge to you was wholly conditional; it depended upon the ratification of your father, and by his disapprobation, is conse-

quently annulled. My principles, against which you also unjustly rail, were instilled into me, in my earliest youth, by a virtuous parent; and they have grown with my growth, until they have become 'bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' I cannot contend against them, even if I would; they are part, and parcel of my being; and you, in your inmost heart, must accurately estimate the extent of their influence, by their predominance of that affection, the real strength of which, you perhaps best understand, when you most strenuously pretend to disbelieve it. But, in the name of heaven, let us not waste these precious moments in fruitless controversy. I have come hither, to tell you, that we are about to part—speedily—and perhaps—*for ever.*"

As she uttered these last words, her voice was broken by emotion; the tears gushed impetuously into her eyes; and she concealed her face in her hands.

But, on my feelings their effect was far more violent; as the intelligence rushed upon them, with all the additional anguish of an entire surprise: a surprise so utter, that, for the first time in my life, I should perchance, almost have doubted the truth of her speech, had not her grief, and the agonized expression of her features, afforded indisputable proof of its veracity. The instant wherein I felt this conviction, a change occurred in my whole moral being: all the rancour, and hostility, which I had recently been enduring, vanished; and the tenderness, and the fondness, and the gentle, almost holy affection, that I had previously entertained for her, returned with even an augmented

strength. In that moment of trial, I possessed for her a love undebased by any alloy: and, passing my arm around her fragile waist, in the deep, and all-absorbing pathos of my heart, without one trace of a less spiritual passion, kissed, unimpeded by her, the glistening tears from her pale cheeks, as they trickled down them, in the endless succession, which my sudden, and unbounded sympathy excited.

At last, she gently extricated herself from my grasp; and, with a powerful effort, recovered her self-possession.

"Dearest Œnone!" I cried, "explain to me I beseech you, the meaning of this intelligence, and when, and why, our separation is to occur?"

"*Why*," she replied calmly, but in a tone of the deepest dejection, "I have already intimated to you; every line of my previous speech must have implied it. But, *when*—alas, in the affection, and weakness of my heart, I have postponed, until almost the twelfth hour, to communicate to you, this painful determination. *To-morrow*, is the day of my departure."

"Œnone!" I exclaimed; and my breath failed me; and I staggered beneath the suddenness of this agonizingly unexpected avowal.

"Yes," she rejoined, as though expostulating with herself, more than addressing me, "yes, to-morrow, I must reluctantly quit, and perchance, for ever, this scene of the happiest moments of my life, the friend I love, and *him* who adores me: him, whom rather than *wilfully* pain, I would cheerfully lay down my life. But, could I avoid the adoption of this measure? Could

I, and still retain a claim to the minutest portion of female delicacy, continue an inmate of the abode, the ruler of which, my own mother's brother, had refused his sanction to my union with his son; knowing too, as he did, that his permission was solicited with my privity, and concurrence. "No," she added, after a slight pause, turning towards, and now, unequivocally addressing me, "no, I could not thus sin against the propriety of my sex, and nature. I have consequently, formally communicated to my stern kinsman, this very morning, my intention of separating from him; he has acceded to it, with a manifestation rather of satisfaction, than of reluctance; and to-morrow, I shall quit this abode,—*for ever!*"

"You will, Œnone!" I cried frantickly.

"I *must*," she replied sorrowfully, but, with a fearfully convincing firmness of tone and manner.

"Oh God!" I exclaimed bitterly, the execrable selfishness of my nature again arising rebelliously within me, "then, what is to be *my* fate?—Where am I to turn? where hide myself—how live—breathe, Œnone, when you are gone!—You know not the danger to which you are exposing me—you know not the madness, which *I* feel I may endure—you know not the deeds which I am capable of perpetrating, if you drive me to desperation, by desertion.—Œnone! Œnone!—I call upon you, to save me, from myself! In your hand, is my fate; you can determine it, as you will: you can award me, happiness, or—*despair!* Blind not yourself to the fact—strive not to disguise it—whatever the results of your decree, *you* will be account-

able for them: and a heavy, and a grave responsibleness, it may prove, if you decide unjustly! *You* cannot see the dark secrets of my heart—even from my own knowledge, I doubt not many of them are hidden—but, believe me, I speak with the tongue of a prophet, when I say, that, if you discard my prayer, desolation,—havock,—ruin,—may reach to the hearths of all our race. Ponder, I implore you, upon this avowal—consider it with every faculty of your being. As long as I can, I will cling to life; but, mark me, if driven to despair, if compelled to experience that I possess not the strength to sustain my affliction, I *will* not perish, by inch-meal, alone!—I *will*, is an expression which I do not often employ—it is one, which I have never before addressed to you; but, I now feel that there is something almost godlike in the phrase, which only an immortal recklessness can both use, and *realize*. Hear it then, again, from my lips; and respect it: I WILL not rot silently, passively, solitarily! Even in my earliest years, the story of the Jewish warrior snared by the Philistines, and immolating himself for the sake of destroying his enemies, created an indelible impression upon my mind. Him, have I always presented to myself as an example; and him, will I imitate if ever I am brought to bay. That destruction which is the work of another's hands, shall never light upon me, *alone;* for think not, I will leave my enemy behind me. No, when I see that escape is unattainable, or undesirable, I *will* grapple him by the throat, and, in his company, leap cheerfully even into the abyss of eternal perdition!—See therefore—

mark—and maturely consider what your rejection of my prayer will bring on me—on you—on *all*."

My passions were aroused; and I expressed myself with almost a maniacal vehemence. Œnone's cheek was blanched; and yet, she seemed nearly as much astonished as intimidated by this avowal of the most sanguinary sentiments from one, whom she had hitherto found so comparatively docile, and amenable to her. There was too, a glance of sympathizing pity in her eye, as though she thought my griefs had excited me into a temporary frenzy. At the moment, however, of my observation of her countenance, I gave a different, and an erroneous interpretation to this expression; which I fancied denoted the deep impression, my arguments and prayers had created on her mind. In this opinion, I added corroborantly,

"I have said enough, I feel convinced, to secure your compliance with my entreaty; and I will now therefore, leave you to ponder upon it. Examine, consider maturely the pleas I have urged, and the terrible, but too faithful picture which I have presented to you, of the consequences of a refusal; and tell me to-morrow, that you are prepared to laugh with me, at the impotent prohibition of a domestic tyrant. Fare you well; may *you* not endure the night of agony, which will be *my* doom. To-morrow, then, we meet again in this chamber?"

She made a faint motion of concurrence; and I left her presence.

But, too literally fulfilled was my prophecy of the interval of torture I was fated to undergo. Words

cannot express the horrors of those lingering hours of thickest darkness. I was oppressed by every feeling, that can at once both excite and enervate the human mind. I seemed to be conscious that the catastrophe of my life was approaching; and yet, had to sustain the additional agony of knowing that I was but a spectator of those who played the game, and possessed not the power of even influencing a single move. Perhaps, to a proud, rebellious, unyielding man, there is no sensation more piteously painful than that of his complete dependence on the caprice, or even the justice, of another. Through every loitering minute in that endless night, I felt, with an ineffible poignancy, that, on the following morning, my fate was to be eternally determined, was to be meted to me, in endless desolation, or in unalloyed happiness; that, on one solitary, perhaps, thoughtless instant of decision, solely depended whether the remainder of my days were to be passed in peace or in strife, in bitterness or in charity; yet, was I utterly incapable of even tempering the decree, which was to effect this despotic disposal of a human life. Such was the galling thought that wrought my complicated sufferings to, perhaps, the topmost pitch of mortal endurance.

That following day at length arrived; and Œnone and I again stood face to face, in the armory of my father. She was equipped for a journey; the fawn was by her side; and the carriage which was to convey her from our abode awaited her in the court-yard. I gazed upon her with consternation, and my hopes sank: but, my fury rose within me.

"What!" I cried, "then, you intend not to listen to my prayer!"

"If you mean," she replied, mildly and sorrowfully, "that I do not purpose to unite myself to you clandestinely, and in defiance of my kinsman's prohibition, you are right in your conjecture. Pity me, I implore you; rather teach me to resist, than sue me to succumb; for I must not, dare not, adopt the course which I *know* to be unworthy; which I know to be founded on a base, opposed to the laws both of nature and of man. I have preached to you, in happier hours, the extent of paternal authority; the necessity of conceding to it, even when unjustly exerted; and the greatness of the crime of filial disobedience. Then, think you that I could be so degraded; think you that I could consent to proclaim myself so very a hypocrite, as ever to sanction an act in exact violation of my own precept? But, let us not, I entreat you, thus imbitter the moments of separation: remember, that in a few brief minutes, we shall be sundered, and for ever!"

When I first entered the room, I had been rendered, I may say literally, partially insane, by the agitation I had been experiencing during the night; and consequently, the confirmation of my most painful apprehensions which her speech contained, almost succeeded in exciting me into a paroxysm of madness. Nevertheless, with a violent effort, I suddenly checked myself, and replied:

"There is yet one hope; go yourself to the unrelenting despot, and remember that this is no period

for the indulgence of feelings of either pride or fastidious delicacy. Go to him, then, and detail to him forcibly, ingenuously, our mutual love; expose to him your heart, and my own, without reserve; and learn whether your beauty and your virtues cannot soften even his callosity."

I ceased: she paused for a moment, and appeared to be considering my proposal. She then rejoined;

"In the plan you advise, I see no moral harm; it is merely repugnant to my own sentiments of feminine pride and delicacy; but, as you say, this is no period for their indulgence; and you have a right to demand from *me*, the sacrifice of all simply selfish impulses, however cherished. I will therefore do your bidding; and may the Almighty grant that I shall succeed!"

With an exquisitely pathetic look of mingled tenderness and meekness, she left the room; and I remained pacing it, in a state of mind which I will not even attempt to describe: I shall soon have to narrate actions which will but too accurately express it. For a few moments, I endeavoured to address my attention to the poor fawn, who by its whining, and by its beseeching looks, seemed to be desirous to display its consciousness of the distress of those it loved. Yet, in vain I strove; I could not for one brief instant extricate a single thought from the vortex of the hell that was within me.

In a few minutes Œnone returned; and her pale, and dejected countenance but too clearly told the failure of her mission.

"I have not succeeded," she said sorrowfully "I

humiliated myself before him; I despoiled myself of all my pride, and all my reserve; and I laid them at his feet: but, the old man would not be mollified. I must confess he even seemed to derive a pleasure from the too visible mortification which he caused me; and, in spite of all my prayers, and firm but respectful expostulations, he would not consent to assign a reason for his prohibition. Perhaps, he spared me in a feeling of delicacy; yet, would I fain have learned the motive; still, I am most willing to believe that it is one founded in justice. Nevertheless, whatever may be the cause, I am certain that his determination is immutable."

"And *you!*" I frantickly exclaimed in a sudden and irrepressible transport of blended grief, and wrath; "what is now, *your* decree! Am I still to expect at your hands, an equal measure of atrocious, fiend-like severity?"

"I have told you," she replied, quickly, and resolutely; "I have told you again and again, with sorrow, and with pain, that I cannot depart from the course which I know I ought to pursue. For *your* sake, I will not; were I to comply with your entreaties, were I to follow the impulses of my heart, and yield to my own selfish desires, my future life would be but one long career of regret, and contrition. I never should be able to forget that for my own guilty indulgence, I had violated one of the most sacred of moral duties; and I should be ceasely apprehending that Heaven would ordain that I should receive at your hands, the retribution which my crime deserved. All the joys,

which under auspicious circumstances, must have been attendant on our wedded state, would disappear, blighted even in their very bud; and our precious hearth would become but the arena of domestic dissension. Consequently, I repeat for your sake alone, were I not instigated by an even graver motive, I would withstand both your entreaty, and the selfish impulses of my own heart. The last die is therefore thrown; and we must separate."

She advanced towards the door; then turning to me, and raising her clasped hands in the attitude of prayer, she added emphatically, while her eyes overflowed with tears, and her voice was broken by emotion,

"May the great God of Heaven bless you for ever, and ever! and that he may deign in his goodness and in his mercy, to confirm the benediction I have invoked, will be the ceaseless supplication of one who can never forget the love she has borne you! And now, a long, a last, farewell!"

"Stay! stay!" I vehemently, almost imperiously exclaimed, as I intercepted her passage, while the fierce ebullition within me, rendered almost alike imperfect, the faculties of speech, and thought: "Stay! for there is yet a hope; a feeble one, I fear, but still I will prove it. I myself will go to the tyrant, and first sue, and then, demand, his permission. Rest you here, until I return."

The passions of that moment must have been but too legibly written on my brow; for, as I closed the door, I heard her anxiously exclaim,

"In the name of Heaven I conjure you, approach not your father in your present state of excitement!"

However, I hesitated not; her entreaty rather accelerated my advance; for I hoped that even if I should fail to persuade, I might intimidate him into a concurrence. These were the perilous feelings in which I sought an interview with my obdurate, and equally intrepid parent.

But, in that instant, a thought suddenly occurring to me that she might avail herself of my absence to effect her escape, I returned, and fastened the door. Then I retraced my steps; and momentarily became more resolved to achieve my purpose at any sacrifice.

THE PARRICIDE.

PART THE SECOND.

Perhaps, the strongest feature of difference between the really good, and pious man, and him, who, without being actively flagitious, is yet animated by neither moral, nor religious principles, is, that the one resigns himself to the inflictions of adversity; the other invariably rebels against them.

Nevertheless, even now, I cannot justly blame myself for a neglect of this duty; I knew it not; I was in ignorance of its very existence; for, it is one that can only be learned either by tuition, or by experience of the futility of resistance. When therefore, misfortune assailed me, unconcious that it was incumbent upon me to yield, I struggled beneath the blow, and rose violently, and turbulently against it, as I would against an enemy; in the full conviction that it was a wrong and an indignity, and that I was the victim of the malice of man, and not the subject of a trial ordained me by Heaven. In this solitary, but grave

error, originated almost all the calamities of my subsequent life.

Animated by the feeling I have previously described, I entered my father's chamber. He raised his head, and regarded me with a remarkable expression. There was much in it that was inscrutable; but, its pervading and most prominent characteristic was a singular union of sterness, and scorn. For an instant, I perused his countenance in silence; yet it presented, as ever, a mystery which I could not entirely penetrate.

"Father," I said, "you know the cause of my presence?"

"I suppose that I do, son," he replied calmly, and contemptuously.

I considered him intently; more so, perhaps than at any previous period. He was a little, slim, dry man, the composition of whose frame seemed to be solely bone, and muscle. In spite of his paucity of stature, he was evidently possessed of much strength, and of very considerable powers in the endurance of fatigue, or rather, of the causes of it; for, his iron frame appeared to be incapable of submitting to any of those consequences which usually attend great and prolonged exertions. One could look at him and almost fancy that he might indulge in perpetual locomotion, during the remainder of his days, yet never require rest. He had a small, quick penetrating grey eye, which roved incessantly; and tended infinitely to strengthen the idea of his exemption from all necessity

of submission to that periodical suspension, and curtailment of existence, sleep. Altogether, there was something in his figure, at once so nervous, so slender, and so supple, that, undignified as is the comparison, I yet must say, always strongly reminded me of the nature of the eel. He seemed destined never to have a grasp laid upon him; or, if he ever were accidentally attained, to be able to extricate himself from it, the instant that it was imposed.

Disturbed, and excited as I was, when I entered my father's presence, it is strange but true, that, almost these very thoughts, with scarcely a variation in either their order of successon or in their distinctive features, passed through my mind, during the single moment in which I was engaged in considering him. I narrate them, because they show the tendency of my passions at the time; and the secret expectation I must have latently posessed of the *possiblity* of our interview terminating in personal violence. When I had completed my examination, which, during its occurrence, I ought to state was almost unconscious, I sank on one knee; and said,

"You see that I approach you with the respect, and allegiance of a son to a father; and I trust therefore, that you will be generous enough to repay me by the entertainment of respondent feelings."

The old man slowly eyed me from head to foot; and his countenance assumed a darker sneer. After an instant's pause I continued;

"Why, I know not, yet I believe and hope that the fault is not wholly mine, but, since the earliest

period of my recollections, we have been divided, far as the poles asunder, though living beneath the same roof. In what cause, has arisen this disunion, even now, I can neither thoroughly understand, nor conceive. I have never been to you a knavish, or rebellious son; nor have you ever, *hitherto*, been to me an oppressive father. No doubt, the state of mutual apathy to which we have at last arrived, has been induced by a series of mutual misapprehensions; but, the primary source of their existence is both beyond my memory, and my comprehension. Perhaps, were we both to take an impartial retrospect of our conduct, each might discover some actions which he would wish recalled: perhaps, I might learn that I had never been to you, an assiduous, and a zealous son; and perhaps you might discern that you had not allotted me a sufficient share of that natural affection, which a child expects, and is entitled to receive, at the hands of the author of his being. There is however, worse than no utility, there is positive mischief, in recurring to the grievances of the past, except in the intention of preventing their continuation. With this object, therefore I now address you. At the present moment, it is in *your* power to preserve me from a doom more hideous than I dare to depict, scarcely imagine; it is in *your* power, to give me happiness, and yourself a *son*; a son, who will feel that he not only owes to you his existence, but his regeneration in righteousness, not only the creation of his body, but the purification of his mind. This deed is in your power; it requires but a word to realize it; speak that word, and I will bless you!—

Speak that word, I repeat, and, mark me, as long as I live, in weal and in wo, in health and in sickness, I will never cease to attempt consistently, laboriously, to repay you, for the inestimable obligation you will have conferred upon me!"

Never had I expressed myself with greater sincerity. I did not utter one syllable that I did not feel; and my heart, and my tongue, acted in mutual and perfect concord. I was confident that there existed within me the power of executing all that I had promised; but, mingled with this conviction, was a lurking and painful apprehension that I should never be subjected to the trial. One glance of scrutiny at his inflexible countenance, suggested to me that such arguments as I had employed, would have but little avail with my cold-blooded father.

After a pause, he said:

"You are very dutiful; I approve your conversion; you seem to have been suddenly inspired by a sense of the course you ought always to have followed. But, pray to whom am I *really* indebted for this very unexpected deference to my paternal authority? To my son, or to his less unscrupulous mistress?—Has his obedience arisen in his own spontaneous impulses, in his own sense of right, or in her duteous suggestions?"

He spoke bitingly and significantly; I felt his sting, and writhed beneath it. I saw that there was no ruth in him; and that I might as hopefully appeal to the mercy of a famished wolf, as attempt to excite his charity, by humility and contrition. I rose from the ground; and, as I was now fully conscious of the futility of the tone I had assumed, and would neither

condescend to affect to have misunderstood his question, nor submit to the indignity of uttering a falsehood, I replied,

"You are not wrong in your conjecture. To Œnone, *solely* to Œnone, you owe the heavy debt of obligation which you apparently estimate so highly. *I* would have married in defiance of your prohibition."

"You would?" he echoed rather sharply; and then resumed, in his usual voice and manner;

"You carry your head loftily, my young cavalier, considering that you are a dependant upon my will. But, you are singularly ingenuous, and, as ever, exemplarily filial. Then, *you* really would have made a bride of your cousin, in spite of my opposition?"—

"I would!" I replied, in a tone of no superfluous audacity, yet, with undiminished decision; but added "Perhaps, however, in reward of *her* obedience, you will grant to her, that concurrence which you are eager to refuse to the rebellion of your son?"

"Then," he demanded, with a slight appearance of relenting, "you are convinced that she will not marry you, unless I previously declare my sanction of your union?"—

"Most certainly!" I eagerly replied; "such is her sense of honour, and of duty, I feel that there is no power on earth that could induce her to become my wife, until you shall have previously pronounced your concurrence and full approval."

"Good creature," rejoined my father, almost kindly; "I am really abundantly indebted to her; for," he added, while a sudden gleam of triumphant malignity flashed transiently across his countenance, "that

approval you shall never have! Therefore, you may as well at once resign yourself to your fate, and go and seek some other quarry; when, if the new damsel should prove equally conscientious, perhaps, I may again let you down the wind, a haggard hawk to prey at fortune; if not, you may even mate together, and —*starve.*"

Oh, how my blood boiled beneath this inhuman obduracy; but, I felt that my all was at stake, and I retained sufficient mastery of myself to reply,

"I have painted to you the gratitude, and the affection you would have excited in me, by a compliance with my prayer; I have told you, that I would have made the remainder of your days happy; that I would have devoted my life to the liquidation of the debt you would have imposed upon me. *Now*, look upon *this* picture. Refuse me my entreaty, and drive me into desperation, and I will be a thorn in your path, as long as the power of offence remains to me; as long as I can raise an arm, or utter a defiance. And when I can do neither, I will find a proxy to execute the injuries which I will solace myself by inventing. *My* peace will have ended irrevocably; and think you, that I will allow *yours* to endure? The law of retaliation is of divine imposition; I reverence it; and, in obedience to its dictates, *will* have "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot;" even unto the very letter of the injury, I will repay the aggressor. Think you, that I could walk along the earth in the knowledge of my eternal desolation, and suffer my destroyer to exist in quietude, simply because he is

my father? Lay no such fond deception to your he the consciousness of our consanguinity will be but a additional incentive to my vengeance. From a *strang* I could patiently have suffered the infliction of man a grievous wrong; but, to be withered, blasted by hi at whose hands I was entitled to demand all the be gifts of affection and charity, is a thought that can n ver fail to stir me into an immortal implacability. D lude not yourself therefore; look to receive from n such offices alone, as eternal, unmitigable rancour ca suggest: as a dead body will I be tied to you, duri the remainder of your days; you shall not act, n move, nor breathe, nor think, but you shall feel up you the baneful weight of an all-encompassing, palp ble malignity!—Now, consider how such a spectac will appear in the eyes of an edified world; how yo friends of the court, the senate, and the camp, will r gard and approve this exemplary strife between a p rent and his offspring; and give me your deliberat and final answer. Decide, decide irrevocably, wh ther I am to be a miscreant, a contemner of all law and a violator of all ties, during the rest of my day or a fond husband, and a grateful and obedient son.

He regarded me for a moment, with a countenanc of ironical admiration; and then replied,

"Excellent! by my paternal love, a filial youth! virtuous, duteous child! an affectionate scion of th parent stem!—And all this profuse expenditure o malediction, all this awful and prophetic denunciatio of impossible retribution is awarded me, simply, be cause I will not suffer you, a baby, to unite yourse

to a doting old woman! a very Jezabel, who deserves to receive at my hands the fate of her illustrious prototype, the regal jade of Zidon,—to be thrown from the window, her blood sprinkled on the wall, her flesh eaten by the dogs, and 'her carcass to be as dung on the face of the field, so that they shall not say, This is Jezabel.'—Foolish, sorry, ungrateful urchin! down on your knees again, thank me enthusiastically for my rejection of your petition, and consider my conduct on this occasion, as an irrefragable proof of the vigilance and extent of my discriminating affection."

I started; I may almost say, I leaped into the air. I had expected to be exposed to contumely and provocation, and thought I had clad myself cap-a-pie in the armour of insensibility; but, each of these fiendish words found a crevice, and crept through it, like the red-hot sand which the fierce Tyrians hurled upon the veterans of the Macedonian madman, and ate into the very marrow of my bones.

"Father, father," I exclaimed, "beware: do not tempt me too far! I feel that within me, is some of your blood—the blood of the tiger."

And my own speech, to my own ears, sounded like the hiss of the serpent.

The impassive old man smiled.

"Father," I said, "revile *me*, as you please, I will endeavour to endure in patience, and in submission; but, dare not, *dare* not to assail with your foul obscenities, a being of an order, and a state, exalted above even your comprehension—who stands in contrast to you, as an angel by the side of a moral lazar-house.

Limit then, your ribaldry to me; and *dare* not even to allude to one, whose very name you ought to feel your own unworthiness to utter."

"*Dare* not!" he repeated, excited for an instant, into an emotion of natural anger; but, immediately relapsing into his habitual apathetic sneer, he quickly added, "and *why* should I not utter the name of my venerable guest?—Surely, such full grown virtue as hers, which has existed through, heaven only knows, how many winters and summers, and is supported too, by all the illusion of an antiquity almost traditionary, cannot be polluted by even the most insulting gibe, which I can fling against it?—Fool!" he continued, pursuing this theme, for he had seen with the eye, and the feelings of a gladiator, the effect of his thrusts, "the woman's years qualify her more to be your *mother*, than your *wife*, and"——

I interrupted him.

"Will you," I vehemently exclaimed, my limbs convulsively trembling beneath the dominion of the direst passions, "will you consent to my union with Œnone?"—

"No!" he replied, in a voice of thunder.

I was in the act of springing upon him, animated by an irresistible impulse of diabolical wrath; and heaven alone can tell what might have been the result! But, in that very instant, recollecting that there still existed the possibility of Œnone's concession, I savagely menaced him with my uplifted arm, and rushed from the apartment.

When I entered the presence of my prisoner, I ob-

served that she was pale, and agitated; and looked searchingly into my face, with an expression of increasing alarm and anxiety. But, I allowed myself not another moment for reflection.

"My stern father has refused me," I exclaimed; "do *you* still purpose to persist in your determination?"—

She made no reply: but regarded me steadfastly with an expression of blended commiseration and apprehension.

"My father," I repeated more vehemently, "has denied me his consent: what course do *you* now mean to adopt?"

Again, she returned no reply: but, casting upon me an affectionate and pathetic look, arose, and slowly walked towards the door. This was her sole, and too emphatic answer.

I was mad; the darkness, and the heat of madness were on my brain; I was sensible of their pressure and their fire; I knew that I was under their influence; yet still, I could not control myself.

For an instant, my eye wandered over the weapons that surrounded me; but, as rapidly, this thought vanished; and, instead of indulging my thirst for blood, I rushed past her to the door, and closed it: then, confronting her, stood towering in her path. I felt my whole frame dilate beneath my frenzy: my eyes seemed bursting from their sockets; every nerve was tremulous and tumid with emotion; and my muscles prominent and rigid as ropes, like them, quivered in the fierce tempest of my dire and delirious wrath.

"Will you," I said in a voice in which was concentrated every passion that can disturb, and defile the human heart, "will you, or will you not, yield to my prayer, and abandon yourself to me, as my wife? Answer me solemnly, Yes, or No; and may all the grave responsibleness of a negative, rest solely on your own perversity!"—

Astounded by my tone, and by the truculence of my gestures and aspect, Œnone gazed scrutinizingly for a single moment, and then firmly and proudly replied,

"Think you that, as I have proved inexorable to your entreaties, I shall not scorn to yield to your menaces?—How little do you know me! What a libel have you perpetrated on my heart and nature! I tell you now, with scarcely a regret, boldly, and explicitly, No! I will *not* unite myself to you, without the sanction of your father: and by all that is most sacred, I swear, I never will depart from this pledge!—*Now*, are you satisfied?"

Instantly, as though a torch had been suddenly applied to the mine that was within me, the vast madness of my suppressed fury burst forth in one long, loud, infernal yell; and then, rushing upon her, in a dire thirst for vengeance, and for havoc, which, during the suspension of all reason, was purely ferine, I seized her fiercely by the throat.

The moment I felt its slender column fully encompassed by my iron grasp, its tender flesh yielding beneath the strong pressure of my fingers, I experienced a new, and indescribable emotion. At that instant,

as though suggested to me by the malice of some ireful power resolved to effect both my earthly, and eternal perdition, the recollection of Cupid *tormenting* Psyche, unnaturally arose within my distempered mind. Fierce, and fell was the commotion it created! a thrilling sensation of ferocious joy shot with a lightning speed, and heat, through my throbbing, and glowing veins; and every foul passion rioted and revelled within me, as though hell had been holding its carnival in my heart.

With a demoniac exultation, I handled and compressed her snowy neck; wound and buried my strong fingers around, and in, its unresisting surface; occasionally shifted the position of my grasp; and increased and diminished its pressure, according to the indications which her countenance afforded of the state of her powers of respiration: thus, procuring for my disordered, and loathsome mind, pleasures that might have dishonoured a fiend!

"At length," I huskily, and triumphantly exclaimed, in the atrocious delirium of my infernal transport, "at length, the doubts of my youth are resolved; and I *have* learned that cruelty *can* confer upon its votary, delights worthy even of a god!"

What induced me to spare her, I scarcely know; perhaps, the respect for the dignity, and admiration of the courage, with which, even in that moment, she insensibly inspired me. Not a word did she utter; not one struggle did she make for emancipation; but stood motionlessly, passively, in my deadly grasp, though the stagnant blood, the swoln veins, and the darkening hue of her features, displayed at once both her sufferings

and her peril. When I relinquished my hold upon her, her powers of endurance were evidently exhausted; and she staggered to a chair, and fell upon it, in a state of almost utter senselessness.

At this moment, my eye caught that of the poor fawn, observing me with a remarkable expression. It was so replete with intelligence, and apparent comprehension of the eternity of guilt, and dishonour, which I had, in one brief minute, incurred, that it seemed to me almost supernatural. My heart sank within me; and I quailed for an instant, beneath this feeble animal's reproachful, and piteous glance, as though I had just discovered that a rational and a powerful being had witnessed my crime, who would proclaim it to the world, and secure to the criminal, his well merited meed of punishment, and infamy. But, in another second, my spirits rebounded with redoubled vigour from this sudden depression: again my passions were fired; and seizing the heavy iron bolt of an ancient cross-bow which lay on a table at my side, I hurled it at the head of my supposed reprover. The poor animal received the fatal missile full upon its brow; and, without a groan, or a murmur, but with another ineffable, and ever memorable look of seeming reproach and monition, which thrilled and chilled my very soul with a superstitious fear, laid its bloody head on the earth, and tranquilly expired at the feet of its scarcely less unfortunate mistress.

In spite of her exhaustion, and the violence to which she had been subjected, Œnone had yet retained sufficient sense to be capable of observing this sanguinary

and dastardly deed. During the moment that elapsed between its reception of the blow, and the extinction of its life, she watched the luckless animal with a countenance of intense horror and anxiety; but, when it breathed its last, drawing a long and deep sigh, with one slight shudder, and an expression of concentrated suffering, which all my cruelty had been unable to elicit, she covered her face with her hands, and turned her back upon her murdered favourite, and upon me. Then, from the irregular and convulsive motion that pervaded her frame, though I could not detect the faintest sound, I judged that she was vainly struggling against a grief which, in spite of her utmost efforts, had found a vent in tears.

At this sight, all my wolfish fury again arose within me. I rushed upon the unfortunate girl, and tearing her hands from her face, forcibly turned her in the direction of the slaughtered animal. But, she closed her eyes; and thus defied and defeated the inhuman malice of my intention.

"What!" I cried, in the madness of my morbid and jealous wrath, "though for me you have a heart of granite, though you can view *my* woes without even the semblance of a tear, your perverted and capricious sympathy can awaken in a flood for your pampered minion? Would that the brute had a life which I might slay before your eyes through every minute in the year! Is this your exalted charity?—This your boasted benevolence?—This a specimen of the virtuous excellence which you have so ambitiously arrogated? *I* am, doubtlessly, a bad man, a knave, a villain in

your philanthropic creed; yet, I can exclaim with sincerity, Heaven defend *me*, from the possession of your fitful, vitiated sensibilities! But you, *you* who can callously sit, and ruthlessly, remorselessly award a fellow being, the decree which shall entail upon him despair in this world, and damnation in the next, are yet so humane, so exquisitely tender, so daintily sympathetic, that you dare not even cast a glance upon the carcass of a wretched fawn. Oh, how I loathe such accursed self-delusion!"

I paused for a moment; and then suddenly added in a startling voice of imperious passion, at the same time savagely attempting to fulfil my inhuman threat,

"Look—gaze upon—intently consider your murdered brute, or, by all that is sacred, I will teach you that my behests are not to be slighted with impunity, that I have an arm which can secure submission to the dictates of my tongue!"

But her eyes still remained closed.

"What! you are too timid, too humane? You will not *voluntarily* obey my mandate? Then, by heaven, I will try whether I cannot discover a mode of forcing your compliance!"

As I thus spoke, retreating a step, while with one hand I confined both of hers in a crushing grasp, in the hollow of the palm of the other, I caught a portion of the blood that was still copiously flowing from the wound in the fawn's head; and laying it upon her neck, suffered the contents to escape.

The moment wherein she felt the moist and warm touch, the effect I anticipated was realized; and, with

a faint start, she instantaneously opened her eyes. But, when she discovered the atrocious cause of her anxious suspicion, saw the deep crimson stain with which she was polluted, she uttered a shriek that might have awaked the dead, and sprang electrically to her feet. Then with a convulsive struggle, so sudden and so fierce, that for an instant I was staggered, she succeeded in extricating herself from my grasp; and, flying across the chamber, snatched from the wall, the Assassinien dagger; that very object of my truculent admiration, which, but the previous day, while regarding it with a grim satisfaction, as the possible redresser of *my* wrongs, I so little deemed that *she* would ever raise against me. Confronting me then, and erecting to its fullest height her stately figure, she exclaimed maniacally, with a power and volume of voice which was both startling and thrilling,

"Dastard! miscreant! demon! approach but one step—dare to move—to breathe—to look, and, as there is a God above me, you shall feel to your cost, that, timid woman as I am, reluctant as I may be to witness the slaughter of an inoffensive animal, I yet have courage enough to look unflinchingly, remorselessly, upon the colour of a monster's heart's blood!"—

The keen, and deadly instrument glittered in her grasp; her long flowing, and white garments were smeared, and dabbled with the sanguine stream from the unfortunate fawn; her attitude was that of a demoniacally inspired Pythia; and her eyes glared with a more than mortal horror, fury, and defiance. A spectacle so impressive as that which she presented, it is not

possible to conceive; and for a moment, I was disturbed, and arrested. But, the darkness of madness was still upon me; a mysterious and irresistible impulse to wrong, still controlled me; I ground my teeth, and beat the earth in a paroxysm of ferocity; and exclaimed in the husky voice of sanguinary wrath,

"Woman! when you saved my life, you saved the life of a tiger—and now, I will requite you, by taking yours!"

As I thus spoke, I was rushing upon my prey, when the door of the chamber was suddenly opened, and my father and sister hastily entered.

At the sight of this unexpected succour, Œnone cast from her the dagger, and threw herself into the arms of her affectionate, and startled friend. And then, the sluices of her heart were opened; her fiery, and unnatural passions deserted her; her bosom heaved convulsively; and the large tear streamed in torrents from her eyes.

As I gazed upon the intruders, I felt that the course of my facinorous fury was impeded: but, I was still under the dominion of the fiend; *my* heart was not softened: and I folded my arms, and awaited in sullen but boiling wrath, the result of this detection of my infernal outrage.

For an instant, even my father's advance was arrested by the surprise, and perhaps, by the horror, of the spectacle which presented itself; but, rapidly recovering himself, he sternly exclaimed, regarding me grimly,

"The knave! he has verily been attempting the

murder of his own mistress, his own kinswoman, *my* sister's daughter! The venomous worm! In sooth, for the sake of others, I must raise my heel, and crush him—or, at least, draw his poison-teeth!"—

How much of this speech arose in natural humanity, and how much in antipathy to me, the heart of the speaker could alone determine; but, I believe, that the former was little concerned in its origin. While however, he made it, he advanced to seize me. I started from my fell lethargy, and seizing the oriental axe which I have previously described, raised it menacingly in the air. Still the intrepid old man continued to approach; my sister uttered a fearful, and a thrilling shriek of horror, but transfixed to the floor, by the very excess of her apprehensions, attempted no intervention. *Then*, therefore, I should have been a parricide, had not Œnone, fearlessly defying the risk of encountering the impending weapon, rushed rapidly between us; and, in the transient strength with which the agony of her terrors inspired her, compelled my father to recede.

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THE PARRICIDE.

PART THE SECOND—

CONTINUED.

HIS last trial, and convulsion of her feelings, infi-
y more than the personal danger to which she had
exposed, combined with the inevitable conviction
ıe eternal desolation, which the incidents of the
previous minutes had entailed upon her future ex-
ıce, wrought her to a state of excitement, which
d her far above the consideration and observance
l mortal fetters and distinctions. The dam of ar-
ial construction was then suddenly overthrown by
flood of Nature; the scales fell from her eyes and
shackles from her tongue: and for one brief mo-
ıt, the liberated woman, free and strong as moun-
air, awoke within her, and, unblinded by preju-
, and untrammelled by doubt, spoke with the voice
ruth, clearly, forcibly, and majestically.

Touch him not!" she exclaimed commandingly
ny father, "touch him not! dare not to lay a hand
n him—sufficient already are the wrongs which

you have committed against your son!—Unfeeling being! guilty parent! obdurate to man, and ungrateful to God! look now upon the result of your omission of your duties. See, in the spectacle around you, the consequence of your neglect of the claims of your child; of your sacrifice of them to the indulgence of your own frivolous, worthless gratifications: of the devotion of every faculty of your nature to yourself alone. And think you, that no punishment will attend such selfish indolence, such guilty activity? Think you, that because, with your own arm, you may have committed no action of positive crime, that you will escape all retribution? As surely as that you now stand impenitently before me, callous, remorseless man, atonement, for the outrages which have this day been perpetrated, will be required at your hands, *hereafter!*

She then turned to me; and, as she addressed me, both her sentiments and her tone arose to the level of a prophetic denunciation.

"And you," she said, "you, who wear the mask of humanity, and conceal beneath it the blood-thirstiness of the tiger, the attributes of the fiend; you, degenerous being, who might have caused my heart to burst, but that my sense of your utter unworthiness, your profound debasement, has extirpated my love and raised me above regret, straightways repent! and expiate your deeds, or dread the career you will be doomed to pursue. Unnatural son! treacherous lover! sanguinary man! tremble—tremble at your own passions!—Unbend—descend from your pinnacle—pro-

strate yourself in the dust—pour ashes on your head—pass the remainder of your days in contrition, and in *submission*, or I see reserved for you, in the long vista of the future, such a career of anguish and humiliation, as mortal being has never yet experienced.

Believe my words; mine are the lips that utter them; but, I feel that the impulses which suggest them, emanate from no mortal source. Be warned then, sinner! and attend to a prediction, which arises in a mercy, and a charity, superior to my own. Henceforward, you will be to me, as the dust, the dirt, which I trample beneath my feet: I rescind for ever the ties that have united us! Flatter not yourself that one stray particle, one solitary vestige of the affection, I once bore you, will lurk in the minutest crevice of my heart; it is gone irrevocably; routed, dispersed by a manifestation of atrocity, of a profundity of turpitude, which, in the inoffensiveness of my own nature, I never could have believed that aught which mortal could even have conceived."

Every word was a wound; and, when she had concluded, I felt as a serpent may be supposed to feel, whose body has been scotched throughout its entire length.

"Son," said my father coldly and sarcastically, for, even this scene had failed to rouse him into excitement, "you are a knave; and your mistress is a shrew. I think that I ought to retract my prohibition, and allow you both to marry, in order that you may prove a *blessing* to each other. Yes—such shall be my course: gentle youth, I permit you to wed this fair

lady: timid maiden, I request you to accept my duteous offspring as your lord. I cannot say that he possesses all the virtues of his sire; but, so good a child must make an affectionate, and faithful husband. However, I apprehend I scarcely need intimate that I hope you will not condescend to make my poor mansion, the arena of your gladiatorial, I mean, *connubial*, blisses; but, reverse the miracle of Joshua, and *build* elsewhere, to the sound of trumpets and other appropriate instruments, your nuptial nest."

"Oh father, father, forbear, I implore you!" exclaimed, suddenly interrupting him, in a voice of intense agitation, my terrified sister: whose cheek, during this fiend-like harangue, had repeatedly varied from the brightest red, to the coldest white; and whose eye had never ceased to wander alternately from me, to the sneering and malignant features of the savage and unnatural being, who was thus ruthlessly and deliberately striving to excite a weak and always morbidly wrathful son, into the entire loss of his too feeble powers of self-government, and, far more basely and maliciously calumniating his virtuous and unfortunate niece.

"Brother," anxiously continued the affrighted and foreboding girl, "brother, leave this spot instantly, I beseech you! grant this one favour to the supplication of your sister."

But, my only reply was a fierce, and menacing scowl.

"Leave this spot," she repeated, "I entreat, conjure you!—stay not another moment, to expose your-

self to the risk of being compelled to reproach yourself with having wantonly occasioned another strife; the consequences whereof, may bring eternal, and intolerable shame, and sorrow on your guilty head!—God in heaven sees that here already you have perpetrated sufficient evil!"

I turned upon her, with unutterable fury, again excited into madness by this reproach.

"What!" I cried, and I felt the daring, and desperate spirit of the fiend towering within me; "what! you all assail me!—But, tremble, for I am wolfish—I am thirsting for blood!"—And I clenched my fingers until the nails penetrated the flesh, and ground my teeth, and stamped maniacally upon the earth, in the very exuberance of my fell wrath. "And think you, that I will retreat, save, at my own good time, and pleasure?—I am like the foreign beast that knows not how to recede—ye may cut me to pieces, but still I must retain my ground. Yet, begone, I will—never to look upon one of ye, again! Before however, we separate, the 'venomous worm,' my tender parent calls me, will leave a portion of his sting behind him."

I gazed, for a moment, with an extent of hate, which no words can portray, upon my ruthless destroyer; he retorted with a glance of mingled scorn, and defiance. I turned towards Œnone; she was still supported on the couch, whereon she had fallen, in complete exhaustion, immediately after the conclusion of her last speech. Her energies had been unnaturally excited in that effort; and the consequent reaction was

proportionate. Her face was hidden in her hands; and her whole frame indicated the excess of lassitude and prostration. That the physical machine was utterly unwound, was most evident; and, if one might have judged the disposition of the mind from the appearance of the body, I should say that, altogether, she then seemed as though she were conscious that *her* game was done, that *her* part in the tragedy of life had been played.

This opinion is the result of my subsequent reflections; at the time of my observation of her, I received a far different impression.

"Woman! I cried approaching her, "to you, I owe all this desolation! but for *you*, who now sit callously, carelessly, spectatress of the ruin you have made, these deeds had never been—but for you, I had never incurred a guilt which an eternity of regret could not expiate—but for you, I had never sunk alive into the deep grave of infamy which these desperate hands have dug! Solemnly, I forewarned you of the result of your decision—I told you that my fate was in your hands—that you might make, or mar it. And how did you reply? You loved your own repute, better than my salvation, and—behold the consequence! I stand before you now, a broken, shattered man, ruined beyond redemption, bowed beneath a guilt to which I will not yield, a conscious, but an *impenitent*, sinner! This, woman, is your deed, and may——But I will not bequeath you my blessing piecemeal; take it therefore, in the aggregate, and share and treasure it among ye, when I am far and eternally removed from

this detested scene. Hear then, father, sister, mistress, your son's, your brother's, and your lover's parting and final benediction—May the curse of the great Ruler of heaven alight upon ye all, for ever, and ever, and ever!"

And uttering a wild, fierce howl of mingled hatred, and defiance, I rushed from their presence, never I hoped, and believed, to look upon one of them again.

When I arrived in the open air, a winter's sun cast a faint, and frigid glare around. Feeble as were its rays, I writhed beneath them. I felt oppressively conscious that my deeds would not bear to meet the light; and experienced a hurried, indefinite impulse to conceal myself from the eye of heaven. After wandering a short time, tormented by this feeling, I perceived a cave, and entered it, there, to abandon myself to my ruminations. And bitter, oh, how bitter, was their torture! At first however, I was too excited, and exalted, to be capable of entertaining a regret for the crimes, I had perpetrated, or even to be conscious of the full extent of their heinousness; but, as my indignation subsided, as the cloud which the passions had cast over the brain gradually faded from before it, I became slowly and painfully sensible both of the evil I had done, and of the situation to which it had reduced me.

Scarcely three brief hours had elapsed, since I was comparatively guiltless; and was in possession of the love, the truest, most devoted love, of a being that, without an hyperbole, might be said to be an honour and a glory to her race, to consecrate humanity by her

virtues. I had too, a home, and a dear and affectionate sister; and, if I was not then, justified in looking forward to a life of supreme happiness, or, at least, in expecting to attain it immediately, for who can determine what patience, and the future, might not have ultimately procured for me; yet, *then*, was it wholly in my own power to have averted a career of misery, and dishonour. But *now*—what was now, my present, and eternal fate? Mistress, sister, home, I had lost them all *irrevocably*; love, affection, domestic tranquillity, I was never again to experience the last, or be the object of the others. Where was I to turn? how act? whither seek shelter? I had neither wealth nor friends; and if I had possessed the latter in numberless crowds, would rather have lingeringly perished, than have sunk from the rank of their equal or superior, to that, of their dependant; the thankful, humble, solicitous object of their capricious and eleemosynary bounty. How then was I to sustain, and to pass, the existence that remained to me?—Concession?—Should I return, and implore the forgiveness of those whom I had injured; should I sue at their feet for the pardon, which I could implore in consideration of my youth, its inexperience, and the violence of its passions; and pledge myself, with many a tear, and many an oath, to devote the rest of my life to an attempt to atone for the crimes of the past? Should I adopt this course? —My answer was but too quickly returned: I would rather starve,—die,—and rot into a portion of the slimy surface that at that moment sustained me, than ever meet again, except in open and unmitigable hos-

tility, the beings who had sunk me to my present state of crime, necessity, and degradation!

I thought upon Œnone as she was in the days of our happy intercourse; and I loved her passionately. I represented to myself all the different scenes in which we had been involved: I fancied her in her chamber; in our walks; and buried beneath the flowers in Ianthe's garden. I recollected her pale cheek; her sudden illness; and the melancholy omen which she had expressed and which had been but too fatally fulfilled. I recalled innumerable instances of her kindness, her tenderness, her constant self-sacrifices, her ever active desire to gratify me. In these and similar thoughts, I indulged until the tears gushed into my eyes; and I cursed myself in the knowledge that this happiness had terminated for ever.

Then, I thought upon the Œnone of my parting meeting; my opponent, my stern antagonist; the inflexible, the ruthless; she who had asserted, and maintained a will of her own; had scorned my prayers, and viewed the future solely in relation to herself. In my imagination, then, the Œnone of the past, and the Œnone of the present, became two utterly different beings; the one, I loved, adored; the other, I loathed, detested. I could not persuade myself to consider them identical; they were possessed of a mutual repulsiveness, like that which is said to belong to some chemical elements, and it was beyond my power to make them unite.

But, what was the result of these reflections? A determination to succumb to my destiny, to bow my

head before the inflictions of Providence, and to attempt to merge the memory of my crimes in a career of unexceptionable conduct? No; their chief consequence was the excitation of an increased hatred against those, whom I believed to have solely occasioned my downfal. I was perfectly sensible of the magnitude of the outrages I had perpetrated, and of the indelible infamy they had entailed upon me; but, I felt little compunction for their commission, for I thought it had been forced upon me solely by the faults of others, and that *they* consequently would be justly doomed to bear the entire responsibleness. Never did it enter into my mind to imagine that the violence of my own passions might have produced the catastrophe of which I was a principal victim. I judged not myself, but my opponents; I viewed *their* conduct sternly; but I possessed not the power of submitting my own to an impartial investigation. In taking a retrospect of the past, and considering the various causes which had conduced to the final, and fatal result, I saw but the actions of others; I was not blind to my own guilt; but, I implicitly believed that *my* dereliction had arisen, step by step, in the previous delinquencies of those who had opposed me; that their sins had perpetually preceded mine, and that mine, therefore, whatever their extent, were only the natural, inevitable, and venial consequence of theirs. I said to myself, "I feel that I once entertained the wish to walk in the right path; the love of peace, and the desire of tranquil happiness were in my heart. Then, whence has arisen my deviation, whence the

expulsion of these virtuous sentiments, and the substitution of the ireful passions which now control me? In the agency of others, not in my own devices."

This, was the process of moral and mental delusion by which I arrived at the conclusion that *I* was heavily, and wantonly aggrieved; and fortified both the obduracy of my rebel heart against the ordinations of heaven, and my sentiments of animosity to those, who were the supposed authors of my downfal. And in the madness of my wrathful nature, I vowed to pursue them with my vengeance, even to perdition!

During these reflections, the restlessness of my mind had communicated itself to my body, and I had strayed from the cavern, in which I had sought to conceal myself. Insensibly too, but strictly in accordance with my present feelings, I had selected those paths, which extended in an opposite direction to that of the mines, and to all the haunts of men.

As I advanced, my mind completely abstracted from the observation of surrounding objects by the interest of my meditations, the day gradually closed, and the night approached. At last, my attention was excited to my bodily state, and situation, by the intense cold of the atmosphere, which, as the light had disappeared, had reached an extent that was intolerable. And now, as ever, the sufferings of the physical being, triumphed over, and dispersed all the hurricane of the passions; and every thought became devoted to the consideration of the means whereby I should protect myself from the evils I was enduring, and from those which I had to apprehend.

I have read in some old chronicle, of a monk, and a nun, whose love having been detected, their crime was considered so heinous by the bigots that judged, or misjudged them, that they were sentenced to be thrown into a subterranean dungeon, therein to starve, and perish together. During the two first days, in spite of his intense sufferings, the male captive still preserved the feelings of a man, and a lover; and assiduously devoted himself to the consolation of his feebler partner in his horrid doom. But, on the third day, the physical agony, and weakness so subjugated the moral strength, the brute so conquered the man, that the cannibal sprang upon the defenceless woman, whose terrible fate he had himself occasioned, and wolfishly fastening his fell teeth upon her shoulder, ravenously rent from it the mean of momentarily appeasing both his hunger, and his thirst.

Whenever I have heard others, or have detected myself, vain-gloriously exulting in the supposed unlimited dominion of the powers of the mind over the infirmities of the body, this anecdote has involuntarily recurred to me; and I have endeavoured to imagine what might have been my conduct, fierce, and sanguinary as I knew myself to be, if I had been subjected to this terrific, and almost preternatural trial. Then too, I have thought, with apprehension, and self-misgiving, how horrible must be those pangs, which could induce a man to descend from the dignity of human nature, to assume that of the monster; solely in the base hope of transiently allaying them, and i

nce of the certainty of thereby only ultimately
nging the term of their duration.

ı effect similar to that which I have narrated,
;h in a far less degree, was produced upon me by
orporeal evils to which I was now exposed. All
deration of my moral calamities was wholly sus-
ed; and hunger, thirst, and cold became the pre-
nant sensations of my existence. Yet, where to
for assistance I knew not; but had it been with-
y reach, I should have been too haughty to soli-
. *My* third day was not yet arrived; the suffer-
and privations, I was enduring, were great; but
orture and madness of their acme, were still far
nt.

om the icy gusts which assailed me, even with
eenness of a weapon, I sought refuge in a cavern;
herein, I passed a loathsome night of memorable,
seemingly endless misery. Winter was then in
ıid career; and consequently, many were the
ı that really elapsed before the return of light;
they appeared to me innumerable.

ı, however, that first insupportable bitterness of
ɔhysical pangs, which arose in their novelty,
what subsided, I became in a degree familiarized
em; and my mind naturally once more recurred
e consideration of the moral calamities I had sus-
d. Then, in that thick, and lingering darkness,
loped, as with a humid, and oppressive garment,
e dense, steamy, and noisome vapours of the pes-
tial cavern, my ireful passions again arose, and
n I writhed beneath their malefick influence. From

that moment, not a lagging hour in that accursed night, but I self-destroyingly occupied in ceaselessly pacing the dank and slippery floor of my loathsome lair, invoking, with the tones and vehemence of a maniac, eternal maledictions upon the heads of those who had reduced me to this dire condition of bodily, and mental suffering!

At length, a few sickly and timid rays appeared in the lowering sky; and day gradually approached. I sallied forth from the den which had proved aught but a resting place to me, far more enfeebled by the mortal conflicts I had endured, than by either the absence of sleep, or my exposition to the biting cruelty of the elements.

Hitherto, in my description of my meditations, I have mentioned Œnone, and my fell oppressor, conjointly, as my opponents; a mode of expression, which may have implied that I possessed for them an equality of hatred. But, it is impossible for any words to convey the superior extent of the antipathy which I bore to the latter; and the deep, and painful sense which I possessed of both the injustice, and inhumanity of his conduct. I looked upon my cousin as only the secondary, cause of my misery, and delinquency; in my father's cruel, and unfounded prohibition of our union, had arisen the first, and real source of all the calamities which had ensued. I thought upon him with loathing; and, as I summoned before my mind's eye, the image of his form, and detested features, his sardonic smile, his sneering glance; recalled, and depicted to myself, his splenetic, disparaging, and ma-

levolent nature; his habitual asperity; his inhuman obduracy; his narrow, sour, yet self-satisfied disposition, I thrilled with an emotion of blended malignity, and disgust, and writhed beneath the scourge of the very vices, the existence of which I was reprobating in him. And, since those days, I have become convinced that, in the great similarity of many of the leading features of our evil dispositions, originated the primary causes of our dissensions.

During the morning, a winter tempest of the fiercest kind occurred. I was on the summit of one of the chains of hills that intersected the district, and nowhere could I find shelter. My face and hands were bruised by the violence of the hail; the excessive cold pierced into my very bones; and all Nature seemed to conspire to impose upon me its severest inflictions. As the day advanced, a slight thaw occurred, when the rain fell so heavily that my garments were drenched. Towards the evening, the frost returned with redoubled vigour; and the surface of my clothes was converted into one entire sheet of ice. Under the excitement, and exhaustion of this intolerable cold, my hunger became excessive; and thus, the principal sources of bodily pain united to torment me.

When the second night arrived, I was completely overwhelmed by inanition, and fatigue; and I fell into a state of stupor, during which, some hours must have elapsed. At last, I became conscious of the stagnation of my blood, and of the utter torpitude of the extremities of my limbs; an almost invincible tendency to sleep heavily oppressed me; and I was sensible that

Death was rapidly approaching. With a vast effort of the mind, as well as of the body, I sprang suddenly to my feet: stealthily, and treacherously, had the insidious fiend already encompassed me in his icy grasp, and I felt the foul chill even to the very core of my inmost heart; but, I resolved to struggle for my existence, and not to yield ingloriously.

During the day, I had found a fragment of iron, and another of native sulphur, and had also collected a few dry sticks; but, had neglected to avail myself of the services they might have afforded me, in consequence of the depression which I have described. These, however, I now prepared to devote to the purposes for which I had preserved them; I therefore rent numerous branches from the firs with which I was surrounded, and strewed them upon the earth, in a circle of some twelve, or fourteen feet in diameter. Intermingled with this more damp material I placed my dry wood, and striking a flint against the iron, directed the sparks that it elicited upon the sulphur, which immediately ignited. Then, entering the circle, I applied the flame to the sticks, which instantly kindling, gradually communicated their combustion to the large branches of fir.

Thus, completely surrounded by a cheerful, vivifying fire, I lay myself upon the ground in the hope of restoring sense to my torpid limbs, strength to my frame, and fresh vigour to my mind. But, I was no Antæus; and the earth proved no mother to me. The cold, the fatigue, and the agitation I had endured, seemed to have entered into the very sources of my

being; and I was the hopeless victim of a depression, that weighed upon me like an incubus. In vain I attempted to emancipate myself from this thraldom; in vain, I strove to gather solace from the sparkling rays around me, the fiend had gained too sure a hold, and no principle of elasticity remained within me. After a few more ineffectual struggles against this invisible, but irresistible dominion, I passively resigned myself to its endurance.

"And why," I thought, "contend any longer against the *cause* of all these secondary sufferings?—*Why* submit to existence itself when it has become a bane? There is but little use in combating with hydra-headed evils which, as soon as one is vanquished, generate a new and more potent substitute. When the tree is diseased to the very core, we waste not our time in lopping the twigs, but we seize it by the trunk, and eradicate it. And what is to die?—A less evil than to be born. To *live*, is to endure an apprenticeship to Grief, to Strife, and to Wrath; and to *die*, is but to cancel our indentures to three stern and tyrannic masters. Then why should he who comprehends the nature, and feels the burden of existence, not anticipate the shaft of Death? Why should he not be his own usher to Eternity? why be forbidden to play the hangman on himself? It is but spontaneously pulling down the fortress which, some day, we know must fall, perchance, when most we desire its duration; it is but throwing up the cards when we are sure that the game must be ultimately lost. And yet, is suicide deemed a crime. By whom?—By those who lie on beds of

poses: the *wretch* will never thus vilify his sole refuge from despair. But, is there any real guilt in the act? Fire is a useful agent, yet when it seizes on his home, a man extinguishes it, if he can. Then, why should he be commanded to witness lingeringly, passively, the combustion of himself, when a fiercer flame seizes on his own heart? Life resembles the fire; and is a useful, and a valuable agent in the general service of Nature; but when, like the Oriental serpent, it turns its own fang against itself, surely it becomes both a duty, and a charity to smite it?—It is as a sword, which is beneficial, or pernicious, to its possessor, according to the degree and nature of the dominion which he exercises over it. When our abodes of brick and stone, become distasteful to us, we prefer to suffer a stipulated penalty, rather than not violate our tenure; yet no man blames us. Why then, when the harassed, exhausted soul boldly aspires to a glorious change of habitation, should it be considered criminal to remove it from this ignoble tenement of mis-employed clay? Who may reply to my argument?—Is it capable of refutation? I know not; little need have I to heed the answer! What boots to me now, the commission of one crime more, or less? The marks of blood are still upon my hands; and if it be not *human*, I fear that I must thank my want of power rather than my want of will, for its absence. Secure in the magnitude of my iniquity, I stand above the apprehension of any farther punishment; the slight tinge of guilt which *may* attach to suicide, will never cast a deeper shade upon the sanguine stains with which I

I am already polluted. Why then, should I longer pursue this hateful pilgrimage? There is not one being that breathes, to whom my existence is beneficial, and to myself, it is malefick. Yes; I will change my state; assign my life to Death; bequeath my earth to earth; and learn what a new sphere will award me of pleasures and pains, of rewards and punishments."

While these morbid thoughts were passing through my mind, the fire with which I was surrounded slowly decreased. On one side, the volume of flame was particularly diminished; and in this direction, I was abstractedly gazing, when I fancied I saw a light beyond that of my own circle. My attention to this object was gradually excited; and, at last, I plainly distinguished two small and glittering orbs; but whether they themselves were intrinsically luminous, or only reflected the rays that fell upon them, I could not immediately determine. At last, after a more careful and minute scrutiny, I discovered to my astonishment, and alarm, that these two shining bodies were the eyes of an enormous wolf, who was patiently awaiting the cessation of the flame, to leap upon his prey.

Beneath the strong instinct of self-preservation, my first impulse was to spring to my feet, and prepare to defend myself. But another, and a very different resolution suddenly arose within me; and, resuming my seat, I quietly confronted the ferocious animal, determined to sustain passively his attack.

"Were it not better," I thought, "that I should fall by the fangs of this beast than by my own? Providence, perhaps, has graciously sent to me this mean

of avoiding the incurrence of whatever degree of guilt may attach to the commission of suicide. I have devoted myself to death; yet, I should be but wantonly weak, were I to reject an opportunity of escaping both the pain and the crime of inflicting it. This monster is acting in accordance with his instinct; is practised too, in carnage; and will despatch me speedily. I will, therefore, receive the boon he offers, with the resolution and alacrity of one, who abhors the curse of existence, and craves intensely the tranquillity of the tomb."

During these reflections, the eyes of the animal continued to glare upon me with a pertinacity, and a savage vividness of expression, which seemed to show that he was ideally devouring me. I kept my gaze as steadily fixed upon him; for, resolved as I was to die, I did not seek to meet destruction unprepared. Thus we remained for some minutes, in mute and mutual scrutiny and expectation. Could any human being have looked upon us at this moment, he must have found a strange and impressive spectacle, in this patient and tranquil interview, and proximity, of an unarmed man, and a mountain wolf of the largest size.

At last, the flames that had hitherto formed a barrier to the advance of the animal, after gradually subsiding and flickering, totally disappeared; and between me, and my blood-thirsty antagonist, nothing but the glowing embers intervened. Then came the long expected moment of action. With one painful throb, one last lingering, clinging feeling, I bade adieu to

life; and laid myself down on the earth, resolved to meet my fate unflinchingly.

I saw the eyes of the ravenous brute glisten with an increased ferocity and avidity; I saw him sink his haunches still closer to the earth; his back quivered for an instant, and then,—his huge form obeyed the violent impetus it had received, and darting through the air, fell upon me with a crushing weight.

Until this instant, I had continued firm in my resolve to perish; but, when I felt the fangs of the infernal monster burrowing into my shoulder; his hot and blood-scented breath fuming into my face, his glaring and luminous eyes almost in contact with my own, I uttered a yell so sudden, truculent, and wild, that even the brute himself appeared to be appalled by it. Beneath the hideousness of this attack, and the pangs which it occasioned me, all the latent savageness of my nature arose with the speed, and almost with the fatal powers of lightning. In the mere impulse of ferocity, not in the instinct of self-preservation, or in the love of life, or in the fear of death, I availed myself of the momentary diminution of assault, which my terrific cry had procured for me; and, with a convulsive effort, succeeded in partially arising, and at last, in firmly recovering my footing.

But, though this fierce, brief struggle had gained its immediate object, the wolf still retained his accursed hold on my shoulder; and I felt his bloody tusks crashing against the very bone. Maddened by pain and fury, I exerted myself with a preternatural strength, and at length, extricated myself from his grasp, and hurled him to the earth.

Instantly, however, he returned to the charge, and striving to seize me by the throat, his vast bulk came into collision with me, with such overwhelming force, that, though, he missed his aim, I staggered, and losing my balance, fell heavily backwards upon the earth; when, my wounded, and mutilated hands alighted in in the very centre of a glowing heap of red hot embers. The physical agony was intense; and foul, and ferine, were the passions that then animated me! Before the monster could renew his assault, I succeeded in again recovering my footing; and then for the first time, the arch demon of facinorous wrath arose within me, in all his stupendous violence. I was mad; I howled, I raved, I shouted: *I* was wolfish; and the sanguinary animal, compared with me, became as the timid man, and I was converted into the beast of prey.

In *my* turn, I threw myself upon my ravenous foe; he sprang to encounter me; but *this* time mine was the fortune to cach *him* by the throat; and deadly and iron was the grasp I retained upon it!—The brute protruded, but in vain, his savage jaws, and gnashed his sharp fangs within an inch of my breast; and again I felt his pestilential breath, hot and reeking with my own blood, steaming in my face. My desperate frenzy was if possible, even augmented; and, while it supplied me with the vigour to hold him beyond the reach of my person with my right hand, with the other, I sought his eye, and in one qnick fell pressure, forced it from its socket.

No words can convey the piercing yell which the mutilated animal then raised. Yet, even in that mo-

ment, instinct was more potent than pain; and, convulsively exerting his vast, and irresistible strength, he overpowered my guard, seized me by the throat, and by the mere force of his huge weight, beat me to the earth. In the fall however, I escaped from his clutch; but, ere I could again completely arise, the infuriated brute renewed his assaults, and fearfully lacerated my face. At last, in spite of all my preternatural exertions, he succeeded in obtaining a permanent hold upon me. Then, conscious that unless I could extricate myself, I was irretrievably lost, in a dying desperation, I resolved to undergo a repetition of the torture which had maddened me. I seized in my gashed and mutilated hand, one of the glowing, red-hot brands that lay scattered around. I *heard* the sudden hiss of the seething blood; I felt the fire dart into my bones; but, still I retained my hold upon the infernal weapon, and determinately thrust it several successive times into the face of the grisly beast, aiming at his sightless socket. One of my blows must have fulfilled my intention; for, suddenly, he uttered a howl that was terrific, and abandoning his clutch, slightly retreated. But, in that moment, I could no longer control the expression of the agony I was enduring; and simultaneously raising a shrill, fierce shriek of mingled anguish and fury, our united yell filled the vast space around, and rebounding from rock to rock, may literally be said to have ascended to the skies.

Ere the wolf could recover from the paralysis which his excruciating torments had occasioned, I threw my-

self upon him, in the mortal recklessness of a man who is conscious that his forces are failing, and that victory or death are dependent upon his present exertion. I could not see him, but I felt that he was resting upon his haunches, and that he was panting violently. With a final effort, in which I concentrated the entire strength, weight, and impetus of my whole body, I drove him to the earth; and, pinioning him upon it with my knees, before he could effectually exert his returning vigour, I thrust my hand into his open mouth, forced it down his long throat, and seizing his tongue, tore it forth by the roots. As I have previously said, I was mad; and, in the delirious exultation of this moment, raising in the air my bloody trophy, and uttering a feeble shout of victory, I waved it for a few seconds triumphantly over my head: then, fell heavily, in a deadly swoon, upon the vast and still palpitating carcass of my vanquished but murderous foe.

Thus, again, my death appeared to be inevitable. Covered with wounds; the vigour of my constitution entirely, and irreparably undermined by the vast loss of blood which I had sustained, by my previous fatigue, and by the want of food; insensible, and stretched upon the frozen earth, in the very depth of the night, my sole companion a slaughtered wolf; in the midst too, of a desolate, and utterly unfrequented region, it seemed as though a miracle alone, could have effected the salvation of my life.

Many weeks elapsed, ere I recovered my senses. Several days however, before they completely returned to me, I recollect possessing transient gleams of reason, and an occasional consciousness of my occupancy of a familiar chamber, and the attendance of a kind and well-known female.

My restored faculties confirmed to me, these half lucid conjectures. To my surprise, and pain, I found that I was in my own apartment, in my father's house; and that the zealous attendant whom I had discerned in the intervals of my delirium, was my affectionate sister. When I first discovered these circumstances, which afterwards so deeply distressed me, they created in me no emotion; all memory of the past was for a time entirely suspended: I possessed perhaps, a degree of consciousness of a previous existence, but it was like that, which one retains of the incidents of an obscure and d[illegible] dream. I gazed around therefore, upon the fa[illegible] jects of my happier days, with a profound a[illegible]

But, gra[illegible] awoke to a sense of the peculiarity of my situat[illegible] began to torment myself with the vain attempt to conceive by what strange occurrence I had chanced to be conveyed into that very spot which of all on earth, I most desired to avoid. Now too, I perfectly remembered my combat with the wolf; and how I could have escaped from the death, which it appeared to me, must inevitably have overtaken a wounded and senseless man in such a situation, was another of the subjects of my anxious curiosity.

My sister manifested the kindest, and the greatest joy at the restoration of my faculties; but, when I sought to acquire a solution of my doubts, she baffled my inquisitiveness, and, at last, decisively told me, that she would grant me no premature explanation; nor converse with me upon any topicks of agitation, until I had attained a state of at least confirmed convalescence.

And most prudent, and judicious was she, as ever, in her determination. Men vaunt their reason, and their intellectual qualities, but women, without arrogantly advancing their pretensions to either, far less frequently err in their practice. My debility was such, at this period, that any violent convulsion of the mind would, I do not doubt, have instantly destroyed me. To her thoughtful kindness therefore, I feel assured that I owe the prolongation of my wretched life.

This most fond, and dear relative would scarcely ever desert my chamber; hour after hour, she would sit by the side of my couch, gazing tenderly, and piteously on my face, and occasionally impressing upon it, a soothing, and sympathetic kiss. Little did I then, imagine the extent of the affection, which these repeated embraces demonstrated; but, I afterwards inferred from my aspect when I again became acquainted with it, that, at this period, it must have been hideous, as repulsive an object as the mind can conceive. I need not enter into a painful and offensive detail; it is merely necessary to state that there was not a portion of my face which the wolf had suffered to escape unmutilated; and to remind those who read these melan-

choly pages, of the innate love and craving of every woman for comeliness, to enable them to form a just estimate of the affection which my sister's action displayed.

My recovery advanced; and at last, one day, while my heart was overflowing with a sense of the goodness, and the charity she had so abundantly manifested, I said, tenderly, gazing upon her beautiful countenance, with a mingled and painful feeling of contrition and gratitude,

"Dearest sister, how could you ever have forgiven me the violence and cruelty I exhibited on the morning of our separation?"

"You were truly guilty, I admit," she sweetly replied; "but, when within only a few hours, as two brief days then seemed to me, after your perpetration of your misdeed, in all the health, and strength, and beauty of manhood, you returned to me, borne on the shoulders of four men, senseless, dying, your bleeding and mutilated body scarcely even retaining the vestige of humanity, I lost all recollection of your misconduct and of the pain and the shame it had occasioned me. Who, indeed, could have looked upon such a sight, and preserved a sentiment of resentment, even though the crime had been tenfold, and the perpetrator a stranger? But, when conjoined to these feelings of, I hope, only common philanthropy, I possessed the additional incitement of knowing that this miserable and senseless object was my once beloved and only brother, I felt all my former affection revive in me with a renewed strength; and, with heaven's grace,

you will never again do aught to suspend it, even or a moment, but pass the remainder of your life in attempting, by a just conduct, to repay me for the love I bear you. Promise me, dearest brother, promise me that you will make this effort for my sake."

Her affectionate solicitude excited whatever of good still existed within my breast; and cheerfully and cordially did I return her the answer she desired. She then detailed to me the manner of my escape; which arose entirely in the slight accident of some miners having heard an attractive account of the richness of the veins of metal in a peculiarly savage and unfrequented portion of the country, and consequently formed a small party for the purpose of examining it. In their route, they crossed the very spot on which I lay, when, by one of them, I was recognised; and thus this simple, but improbable occurrence was the cause of my most unexpected and involuntary restoration to the home of my father.

"And Œnone?" I said.

"Œnone," replied my sister ruefully, "is gone. You have entailed, I fear, eternal sorrow upon her. If I rightly estimate her nature, there is in it no particle of caprice or instability. All her affections are and must be enduring. I believe that these conjectures are accurate, and consequently apprehend that you have been the cause of her suffering a wound which time will never heal. But the same consistency of character which will occasion the permanency of her sense of your loss, will not fail to render her equally retentive of your aggression. Be assured

she will never forget it; and, I fear, never forgive it."

I sighed; and all the compunction of which my nature was capable, thrilled through my heart.

"On the day following that of your alarming departure," continued my sister, "Œnone also quitted the house. She was evidently anxious concerning your fate; and she told me that she should never cease to feel an interest in all that related to you; though, she added, with an air of firmness which was convincing, that, were she to live eternally, she would never voluntarily see you again. She said, too, subsequently that you had deceived her; that she had detected passions in your nature, of which her consciousness would never allow her again to enter your presence, and entertain a feeling of even common personal security. 'But,' she continued, sorrowfully, 'they have produced a far worse effect; they have forced upon me the knowledge of my inability of retaining one particle of respect, esteem, affection, love, of any sympathetic sentiment, save compassion, for their unfortunate and fated possessor.'"

"My dearest sister," I cried, reproachfully, "what can induce you to repeat this cruel discourse? Do you not know that you are bitterly tormenting me?"

"Not *fruitlessly*, I hope," she replied; but if you desire me, I will, *now*, never again recur to this theme."

"One more word; where has the injured girl sought a home?"

"I know not; though my heart was overflowing with

anxiety on your account, I still retained sufficient interest for her, to be most solicitous to learn whither she purposed to proceed. But, she repeatedly and positively refused to gratify my desires; and even my father, who indeed was very kind"——

"Mention him not!" I passionately exclaimed, suddenly interrupting her, "mention him not; unless you seek to force me to exchange my present calm, for strife and wrath, to convert my tranquil heart into a concentration of gall!—'*Kind!*' *kindness* from him?—Kindness from the hyena—kindness from the tiger-cat!—How *can* you be so very a dupe?—How *can* you, rich as you are in all the gifts of natural, and acquired intellect, yet be so arrantly blind, as to suffer a demon to pass himself, even into the very citadel of your purest and holiest affections, as an angel, simply upon the infallible, unequivocal pledge of his own inestimable, Punic parole?—Fond, foolish girl, it maddens me, to see you thus audaciously made the victim of your own worth! He tells you with a sneer of hell upon his malignant countenance, that he is all that is good, that he emanates from Heaven; and you, in your virtuous credulity, in your duteous blindness, implicitly believe him.—But, let us quit this theme, unless you seek to drive me to distraction!—Tell me, does he know that I am, at this moment, an occupant of his accursed abode?"—

"Oh, my brother," she exclaimed, "how can you allow yourself to entertain such sentiments of a father!—If he *have* behaved oppressively to you, you ought, for that very reason, to experience an increased

pride in showing that you still know your duty, as son, though he may have forgotten his, as sire—that you can bear, and forbear, that you can receive aggression, and repay with righteousness."—

"Sister," I replied, "I am sick of this theme, of all this hackneyed dictation of the doctrine of paternal supremacy, and filial submission. I had enough of such canting sophistry from Œnone; she sated me with it; and I will not endure it a hundred fold repetition of the nauseous dose from you. Had *he* begun by doing his duty by me, I should naturally and necessarily have responded by a similar course; I should *then*, have been as much a votary of good, as I now am a creature of evil. The tone, and features which I possess, I have adopted from him; they are the work of his hands; and by heaven, he shall yet live to rue both the iniquity of his example, and the fidelity of my imitation!—Tell me, again I ask you, does he know that I am a reluctant sojourner beneath his hated roof?"—

"He does; he was absent when your body was brought here; but when I communicated to him, your arrival, and the state to which you were reduced, he expressed both sorrow, and sympathy, and——"

"Foolish girl!" I cried in extreme excitement, impatiently interrupting her, "you are killing me by this perversity! Look," I added, pointing to the large drops of debility which agitation had produced upon my forehead, "look at the effect of your mistaking kindness. Mark me, I do *not* believe that he deceives you; I do not believe that you entertain the

opinion of him, which you profess. But let that pass —*me*, he can never deceive. I know him, within and without, even to the very core of his being. Why, if he had suddenly conceived for me the affection which you suppose him to possess, why has he never been to ascertain the state of a son, for whom he has expressed so much genuine 'sorrow and sympathy?' But, God forbid, that such a caprice should ever enter into his head! I would not voluntarily look upon him again for all this world contains!"—

As I thus spoke, the arras of that part of the chamber which was immediately opposite to me was suddenly raised; and, emerging from beneath it, appeared my father, who advanced slowly into the middle of the apartment. Upon his face, sat his most satanic smile; and, in his most sarcastic, biting tone, he said, directing upon me a withering expression of infernal malignity.

"A tender parent has dutifully come to inquire after the health of his exemplary, and affectionate son?"

The instant my eye rested upon that countenance gleaming with malice, and heard the ironic and familiar tones of his detested voice, the whole circulation of my blood was thrown into a tumult. For a moment, it darted wildly hither, and thither; it rushed into my head, and then, returned in a flood upon my heart: I felt as though the whole order of my being had been directly reversed; and darkness came upon me.

When I recovered my senses, I found my sister

affectionately tending me in much anxiety and alarm. I gazed quickly, and apprehensively around the apartment; but, when I discovered that my inhuman oppressor, had departed, my re-awakening emotions subsided. Nevertheless, my nerves had sustained a shock, the impression of which, was far too powerful to be soon obliterated; and I lingered through the remainder of the day, in a state of debility, and depression, that might have excited sympathy in any breast, but that, of the stern object of my immortal hatred.

The next day, I was still labouring under the effects of this blow. My sister was sitting by my side; and her anxious countenance plainly told me that she apprehended a relapse. At this moment, the door of the chamber was opened; and my father again stood before us. He made a similar address to me; and he then invectively added, with even an augmented expression of exulting malice,

"As I perceive by your countenance that my presence occasions you so lively a satisfaction, I shall daily indulge you with it. Every morning expect me to come, to learn the condition of my son's health."

Again the violence of my emotions overpowered my weakened faculties; the sickness and darkness which are the precursors of insensibility, slowly stole upon me; and I sank upon my couch, in a state of stupor.

Yet I did not wholly lose my senses; all the time I was conscious of the weight of wrath, and resentment, that lay upon my heart. When I recovered the full possession of my reason, it is impossible to express the

extent of the hatred, and hostility which the renewed consideration of my unnatural relative's parting intimation excited within me. And I thought, "Was there any punishment which a parent who would permit himself to indulge in such an atrocious and brutal tyranny over a prostrate son, did not deserve?"

I have little doubt but that my father's self-love similarly influenced, and blinded his judgment. I dare say he conceived that, as I had been criminal enough to allow myself to entertain a sentiment of antipathy to him, until it had acquired an irresistible ascendency over me, he was perfectly justified in awarding me *any* punishment which *any* circumstances might supply him with the power of inflicting. I repeat I have no doubt that these were his opinions; and that thus, to himself, he palliated the brutality of his own conduct: so potent, and so general, is the sophistry of egotism!

But, *I* was inclined to regard that conduct with a very different judgment; it maddened me! and my frame was gradually perishing beneath the violence of my wrath. I literally writhed under the consciousness of my incapability of defending myself against the loathful tyranny I was enduring, or of preventing him from practising it with impunity. I could have schooled myself into submitting to any infliction, if I could have dealt to him an equal measure of punition; but, my sense, of my impotence, possessed a sting that excited me into phrensy.

I appealed to my sister; I asked her to give me now, her opinion of this conduct of my father; I asked her

whether this cold-blooded, and demoniac persecution accorded with the professions of sorrow, and sympathy which he had made to her; and then I burst into a paroxysm of wrath, and raged and cursed, and invoked every earthly and future evil, upon his detested head. My sister attempted to appease, and console me; and again strove to inculcate to me the necessity of submission, and patience; but I saw that as she gazed upon my retrograding state, my violent agitation and rapidly increasing debility, sorrow, and commiseration were in her heart.

The third morning arrived; and with it my savage tormentor to repeat his inhuman molestation. The sting of his sarcasms was as pointed, the shafts of his malice as well directed, as ever; but, I had resolved to forbear; and I spoke not, nor evinced even by a look, any symptoms, of the agonies I was enduring. Neither, during the day, did I recur, to his visit, to my sister; nor complain frivolously, and fruitlessly to her of the persecutions which neither of us could control. But, the moral effort that was necessary to enable me to suppress all indication of the wrath of my heart was destroying me. I had no longer any portion of the bodily strength which had once enabled me to sustain uninjured, the fiercest tempests of my mind; the stamen, the root was gone; and my constitution was undermined for ever. During this day, therefore, I was gradually, and slowly sinking beneath the conflict; and my anxious sister repeatedly, and beseechingly declared her apprehensions that my life would speedily be again endangered, unless I could

control my thoughts: for she saw legibly written on my countenance, the agitation I was enduring; and was not to be deceived into a belief of my mental tranquillity, by the silence I had imposed upon myself, and maintained at so great a cost of suffering.

The fourth day arrived; and it proved one of the most memorable in my eventful life. My fiend-like tormentor entered the room; and inferring from the increased hideousness of his sinister countenance, apparently resolved to compensate to himself, for the supposed failure of his visit of the previous morning. What mode however, he had intended to have adopted for the purpose of exasperating me, I know not; for, the very instant in which he appeared, the fire that had been smouldering in my breast, burst into one fierce and indomitable flame. With the sudden, and transient strength, which transcendent wrath supplies, I arose in my bed, and, violently shaking at him, in insulting and malignant menace, my emaciated arm, maniacally exclaimed,

"I hate you, old man—worthless old man—I hate you—I loathe you—and I defy you!—Come—come—within my grasp—and kill me, if you can, but let me *prove* to you my abhorrence!"

My father advanced; hostility, and malevolence flashing from his dark, and glittering eye: I attempted to place myself in a position to oppose him; but, after a violent, yet fruitless effort, fell heavily, in complete exhaustion, on my couch. Still however, so entirely was the energy of my mind aroused, I contrived to retain an attitude of defiance; and still, my grisly an-

tagonist continued to approach me. What must have been the result of our encounter had it occurred, is evident; for my debility could not have even momentarily sustained the least exertion of his strength. But, in that instant, my sister suddenly rushed between us, and, standing over my prostrate body, almost as a lioness may be supposed to cast herself as a shield before her young, intrepidly, and majestically confronted him; passionately, and reproachfully exclaiming, with a vehement, and stern gesture of prohibition,

"Father! father! advance not—stir not—remember that he is your son!"—

This sudden ebullition of reprobation in one, hitherto, so passive, and submissive, so feminine, so all-enduring, evidently startled and impressed my vindictive foe, and instantaneously arrested his advance. In another second, however, his anger appeared to flow in a different direction, for, he rapidly strode towards my sister, with an uplifted hand. But, in that moment, again, excess of animosity and apprehension restored to me the power of motion; and rising upon my bed, and fiercely and frantickly menacing him, I screamed with the wrath, and in the voice of madness,

"Father! savage! dastard!—touch her not—dare not to lay a finger upon her—kill me, murderer, if you will, but spare that girl!"

The fury and the wildness of these unearthly tones seemed almost to awe even him; and he instantly ceased to advance. Speedily, however, all his habitual

phlegm, and self-control returned; and he exclaimed in his usual voice of cold, diabolical, irony,

"What a loving pair! what tenderness! what affection!"

Then, his manner changed; and he added fiercely and invectively,

"Rebellious vipers! evil-minded, yet stingless, with no weapon but your tongue, and that, like the ignoble toad, spits only an innoxious venom, know ye not, that I could crush you, if I had the will? —Think you, that the hybridous audacity, the mongrel bravado begotten of your unnatural union against your parent, would form any bulwark against my wrath, if I chose to unleash it upon you?—Worms!—earthlings!"

He regarded us piercingly with an expression of ineffable hatred, and disdain; then resuming his wonted air, and tone, added sarcastically,

"Yet should I rather admire your mutual devotion, and respect the exemplary tie that unites you. Instead therefore, of yielding to the choler which your thoughtless, and venial intemperance may have excited in me, I will now acquaint you how ye shall be condignly rewarded. To-morrow, fond pair, you shall troop, baggageless, penniless from this house, for ever. I disown you, I discard you, I rescind the links which Nature in a moment of malevolence, compulsorily imposed upon me; and cast you adrift upon the world, to learn whether you possess the skill to pilot yourselves into some less inhospitable port. Fight your own way; your destiny is now in your own custody; sink, or swim; fatten, or starve, but, thank my cle-

mency that, though quite as helpless, I do not send you forth as naked, as when you were born. Begone, therefore, my children, take my blessing with you, it will not burden you with its weight; and, when you are hungry, you may think upon this hour of parting, and feed upon your mutual affection, or—upon each other: for, to-morrow, as sure as the sun rises, as sure as there is a heaven, an earth, and a hell, you depart from this house, voluntarily, or forcibly, alive, or dead, as I will not even suffer your corses a resting place within these walls. I have spoken your doom; and you know me too well to require that I should swear by all that is sacred, and by all that is infernal, I *will enforce it.* So now a last farewell—my children!—I cannot say that I entertain the fear which many fathers may endure in a final separation from their affectionate offspring—that, of oblivion on their part. *You* will never forget *me; my* image will ever be gratefully impressed upon *your* memories!—Again therefore, farewell!"—

My father quitted the apartment; and left us both confounded by his unparelleled barbarity. My sister was weeping bitterly; and, for a brief moment, my heart opened to a consciousness of her woes, even to a temporary regardlessness of my own. But, my worst misfortune was, that all my impulses to good, were only more or less transient; while the feelings of strife and evil which opposition, or oppression excited in me, were never dying. There are some natures, which seem expressly calculated to withstand the temptations of prosperity; and others, equally fitted to en-

dure triumphantly, the inflictions of adversity. But, reverse the trial; subject the nature, which might have incurred all the best blessings of fortune, without the manifestation of one unworthy sentiment, to the pressure of calamity, and affliction, and it may be converted into that, of a demon. In a similar manner, the man who might have tranquilly and submissively, sustained all the worst blows of Providence, all the shafts its malice could have directed against him, shall yet succumb to its kindness; and become, under the lavish shower of its favours, self-willed, arrogant, inhuman; an oppressor, and a tyrant.

And this, was the luckless category, wherein I was placed; and hence, arose, I firmly believe, the doom which I ultimately incurred. I was possessed of qualities, which would have enabled me to have pursued tranquilly and unblameably, my path through a life of *prosperity:* and no man should have known that my heart contained the seeds of evil. But, my fiery temperament was perversely thrown upon a career of difficulty, and opposition: every contrariety struck upon me as the flint against the steel; and spark followed spark, until my whole nature was enveloped in one general and indomitable combustion.

What little of good, however, still existed within me, was again temporarily called into action, by my sister's sorrow. I could not refrain from feeling that solely owing to her generous advocacy of my cause, she had entailed upon herself this bitter blow. And yet, strange to say, for such virtue is rare, in her disinterested grief, the generous girl mourned far more

her father's delinquency, and my subjection to privation, and adversity, in a state so unfitted to encounter them, than the equal share which she herself was consciously doomed to partake. I believe implicitly that she did not devote a single thought to herself; but lavished all her sympathy upon the two beings least worthy of it.

Another might have been subdued into resignation, by her bright example; but, it was impossible for me, tempered as I was, to behold it, without feeling my sentiments of wrath against my father far more excited than allayed. I could not support the idea of such goodness, such exalted affection, being exposed to every infliction that man in his most uncivilized state could endure; to the wind, and the rain, to the heat, and the cold, to want, and perhaps ultimately to death, through the horrid path of a lingering starvation. For even, if in the love of life, we could sink so low as to beg our bread, where could we obtain it? Not from the ferocious miners; among whom, if a few less ungenerous spirits resided, plenty was a word unknown; ill-fed, and ill-paid, they possessed scarcely a sufficiency for the support of their own existence. Friends, I had none; Ianthe and her father, for some reason, then to me undiscovered, had left their abode and departed for a foreign land: and through the world, there breathed not one, at whose hands I had more than a a stranger's title, to claim charity and protection.

These were the thoughts that maddened me; and, as the day advanced, and the appointed time of our expulsion drew hourly more nigh, my agitation aug-

mented. In the mental weakness, and indecision which my bodily ailments produced repeatedly, I consulted my sister as to the course we should pursue. But she, poor girl, knew not what advice to give: all *her* anxiety was, to learn how she should remove me from the house, in my present state of debility: for even she entertained not a hope of propitiating my inexorable father; we both *felt* that his decree was immutable.

At last, the shades of evening enveloped the earth; my tortures increased; and once, or twice, during a few brief minutes, I became delirious. As however, the night advanced, I recovered my wandering senses: at least, such is my firm belief.

And now, I have to relate the most extraordinary incident of my life; one, so extraordinary, that my reason tells me that it can never have really occurred, that I must have been still under the dominion of my delirium, and have mistaken one of its wild and terrible phantasms, for a reality. But, what is human reason?—Human arrogance—human fallacy. Who can say, what may be, and what may not be? who can define the limits of the possible, and the impossible? He who pretends to have achieved this task is both foolish, and impious. The laws of nature *have* been violated; the great Principle of Evil *has* "gone to and fro upon the earth, and walked up and down on it;" and spirits of less power *have* entered into the bodies of men.

I will now however, narrate the occurrences which I witnessed, as they appeared to *me:* let each attach

to them the degree of faith, or incredulity, which he may deem them to deserve.

I was lying on my back, the wretched victim of the most evil, and truculent thoughts. My sister was slumbering in a chair, by my side: several times I spoke to her, but in vain; I even arose, and shook her arm, but her sleep was so profound, I did not awaken her. Then, in pity to her sorrows, and fatigues, I desisted from my attempts; and strove, by every possible means, to divert my mind from the consideration of the atrocious project that was at once both recreating, and torturing me.

The wind was loudly, and plaintively whistling within, and without: and, though the rain was beating heavily against the casements, the cold was intense. Consequently, an enormous fire was collected in the large hearth of the spacious chimney. Some of the logs of which it was composed, were singularly large; and their flames having expired, and all their gaseous qualities been entirely consumed, they now presented one glowing surface of red hot matter, which shed through the chamber an imperfect, and mysterious light.

I listened to the wind; I strove to direct my attention to the rain; I made every effort to divert my mind into another channel. Turning towards the fire, I contemplated the radiant pile; and particularly distinguished one large mass of ignited timber. I watched intently the numerous fluctuations of form, and hue, the ever varying succession of flickering, lambent shades, which its glowing surface incessantly exhibit-

ed; and recalling to my recollection the story of Althæa, and Meleager, at length contrived to persuade myself that the life of some unfortunate being was dependent upon its preservation. This phantasy I cherished, until it obtained such possession of my naturally superstitious imagination, that I was half meditating an intention to crawl from my bed, for the purpose of attempting to extinguish the fatal brand; when it experienced a change that instantaneously arrested my attention, and transfixed me on my couch. The various vacillating shades, which had hitherto floated shapelessly, and uncertainly, like fiery clouds over its glowing and ever varying surface, suddenly concentrated themselves into a marked and definite form. And now, be my story implicitly believed, or discredited contemptuously, but, then, by all that is sacred, with these eyes, I saw distinctly, unequivocally, the figure of a man plainly depicted, in miniature, upon the burning log! Neither could I doubt whom this image was intended to represent; it was the exact counterpart of my father. The dress, the attitude, the action, the motion—all combined to render a non-perception of the similarity, impossible.

While I was gazing in mingled astonishment and dismay, upon this extraordinary spectacle, another actor appeared upon the fiery stage. It was myself; so evident was the resemblance, none who had even once seen me, could have failed to have observed it. This figure advanced from the side towards which my father's back was turned. Slowly, and stealthily, he crept towards him; and in his hand, he bore an axe of

Oriental form, the very image of that which had so often attracted my gloomy admiration. Nearer, and nearer, my crafty effigy approached to that of my sire; at last, he arrived within arm's length of his person; and then, my trembling anticipations were quickly realized. The fatal axe was swung high in the air—down came the murderous blow full on the undefended skull of the victim—and the fiery shadow of my slaughtered father fell prostrate on the glowing soil.

The thought of my inmost heart was laid bare! and I trembled beneath this supernatural revelation of it, and felt as dismayed as though I had already committed the deed, and been convicted of its perpetration.—But, the horrors of that night were as yet, only begun.

While my mind was still in this state of paralysis, a sudden flash of vivid light momentarily blinded me. When I recovered the faculty of sight, I perceived before me, within a few feet of the fire, a naked figure of a human shape; but, how different the aspect, and how different the matter! The form was that of a tall, perfectly proportioned, and majestic youth; but, throughout its entire space, it was luminous; a pale and lambent flame played over its whole surface. The countenance alone, however, possessed for me the basiliskan power, which at once fascinated, and tortured; for, it was the living counterpart of the face of the Medusa of the ancient gem!—The vague, wild dream of my youth was at last realized! there, before my horror-stricken eyes, stood a terrible incarnation of the object of my fetishidolatry: and now, as I gazed

upon the too memorable features, I felt blasted beneath the weight of their mingled loveliness, and depravity!

Independently, however, of its supernatural characteristics, in the mere force of its human expression, and the perfection of its form, this startling apparition produced an effect of awe, and majesty, which were appalling and oppressive. I cannot better describe its general aspect, than by saying, that it united the august figure of the Belvidere Apollo, to the infernal beauty of the Medusa.

I was heart-struck; the hair bristled on my head; and my whole skin was covered with the heavy dew of a superstitious panic, while I gazed upon this terrific vision; which, in its spiritual existence, was as perceptible to me as ever was human life, in its most material state. But, supposing even that my eyes could have been deceived, I can bring another sense to testify to the truth of my narration; for, the figure spoke: and could my imagination have unconsciously persuaded me, not only into the invention of a sequent and coherent colloquy, but, into the conviction that I *heard* it?

"What wouldst thou with me?" exclaimed an unearthly voice, musical, yet painfully thrilling.

"With thee?" I cried in tones of fear, "I seek thee not."

"Thou hast summoned me," it replied.

"I summoned thee not."

"Thou hast—unwittingly."

"How?"—

"*By thy evil thoughts*," retorted the fiend. "There

is a depth and access of evil, which the human mind may achieve, that exerts an irresistible sympathy over the beings of a nether sphere. Even in the lowest abyss of hell, I experienced the force of the chaos of crime which your breast was engendering; and I come in obedience to its attraction, eager to assist in subduing it into order."

"Who art thou?"

"How shall I tell thee? How convey to thy finite powers, the qualities of immortality? From generation to generation, among the sons and daughters of men, I have possessed but a sorry repute; wouldst thou crave to inherit their notions, and prejudices concerning me, *them* I can fully reveal to thee, by the mere repetition of the designations they have attached to me; but, the true knowledge of my nature is incommunicable to a child of clay. The uncourteous Greeks denominated me, Ate; the imitative Romans, Discordia: in the East, I have been called Belial, Arimanius, Eblis. As a penalty for my deeds, the silly insects have tried to sting me with words; and I have borne many names, and contumelies, and falsities, at the hands of the ephemera of thy race: among my own, conspicuous in the solitude and majesty of my power, I am their CHIEF; and seek no other title."—

"Then, thou *art* a spirit," I said.

"I am immaterial, and eternal. But, I have a still higher claim to thy respect. I am thy Destiny. In thy earliest youth, thou hast worshipped me in thy inmost heart; and even in the very hour of thy first secret homage, of thy first mute acknowledgment of my

supremacy, the disposition of thy future was irrevocably accorded me."

And I fancied that a darker shade of malignity alighted on his brow, as he added,

"Look on me well; revere, adore me, for before you stands the ruler, the determinator of your fate."

"Tell it then, to me!" I exclaimed eagerly, with that strange and strong thirst which all men possess for a premature knowledge of the events, which the hereafter is respectively to bring to them.

"Have I *not* told it to thee?" replied the fiend, at once contemptuously and exultingly; "have you not gazed upon the pageant, which I ordained to be enacted for your instruction?"

I shuddered: and then, rejoined,

"And what will be my subsequent lot?"

"Gaze again upon the book, which revealed to you, your prior fate."

I turned to the fire, and directing my attention to the glowing timber, again observed the same sudden fixation of its restless and fluctuating shades. In another instant, the semblance of a large wheel laid horizontally on a mimic scaffold, appeared in the centre of the burning mass. Then, a figure, which I could not fail to perceive was intended for the representation of myself, entered from one of the sides, followed by another, who bore upon his shoulder, that, which his subsequent use of it denoted to be a heavy, and murderous bar of iron. The effigy, which reluctantly, and painfully, I felt was the type of myself, and my fate, walked slowly and totteringly. Its back was

bowed; its head almost rested upon its chest; its arms hung laxly before it: the hands were tightly interlaced: and the whole attitude expressed the extremity of dejection. When it reached the scaffold, in spite of its resistance, the other figure fiercely, and violently threw it upon the wheel; and then, bound it forcibly to this fatal altar of hellish cruelty. Still, the reluctant captive struggled piteously and vehemently to free itself: when, the ponderous bar was raised; and down —crash—it fell full upon the shattered arm of the shrinking, and miserable craven. Eight times, the dire weapon descended, until each of the limbs of the tortured wretch was broken in two places; one fracture being above, and the other, below the joint. With a loathsome distinctness, I saw the start, and the fearful, convulsive writhe, which every murderous blow extracted from the blenching, and sorry representative of my accursed destiny; and could almost fancy that I heard the groans and shrieks of its mortal agony. At last, in the very moment that my sympathetic torment was growing unendurable, the executioner raising again his ponderous mace, and directing it to the chest, dealt the *coup de grace* to his expiring victim. The smashed trunk briefly, and slightly quivered; and then, life was extinct.

Oppressed with horror, I turned shudderingly to the fiend; he was gazing intently upon me; and a dark, and grisly smile of exulting malice was witheringly expressed upon his beautiful, but wreakful, and fearful countenance.

"Well," he contemptuously, and tauntingly ex-

claimed, "can you read the book which contains the story of your destiny? Is the alphabet of which it is composed within the circle of your knowledge? Can you spell the name of him, whose effigy has just died a coward's and a felon's death?—Dastard! *why* is your cheek so blanched?—Can you, who have no ruth for other's woes, yet writhe so hen-heartedly beneath the mere prospect of your own? Recreant! exult rather in the surety of your fate: none but the caitiff will dread aught, save suspense."

In spite of the oppression, and the horror, which his presence, and the bloody spectacle I had witnessed, occasioned me, these demoniac taunts aroused me from my stupor; and, in a transport of indignant wrath, I exclaimed,

"Foul fiend, thou liest! *I* shall never die a *coward's* death!"

On his countenance was inscribed every ireful, and facinorous passion, while, with a fell triumph, he slowly, and emphatically replied,

"*Your doom is written!* An invisible succession of prepared, and secretly linked, but seemingly natural events will degrade you from the proud state of independent man, into that, of a mere human machine, and infallibly conduct you to one ordained, and certain end. Waste not therefore your menaces; indulge not your hopes: shed not your tears; your fate is fixed—irrevocably—*inevitable!*—Struggle as you will—strive—pray—repent—the path is formed from which you cannot deviate—the groove is cut, from which you may never more escape! *You* may see not your trap-

pings—you may feel not your bonds—you may hear not the clank of your chains—you may revel in your blindness—but, even as the unconscious heifer, you are caught, you are bound, you are arrayed for the slaughter! *My* ban—the ban of *hell*—is upon you, for evermore. Hail to thee then, equal, and brother, in sin! Let me offer present homage to the future murderer! condemned malefactor! wheel-broken felon! Or, to concentrate in one emphatic summary, all your glorious claims to my regard, hail to thee, *Parricide!—parricide!—parricide!*"

Three times, he uttered this hideous word, with a stinging, a withering malignity, the tones of which seemed to bite bodily into the very core of my being. In the same moment, all the mitigating features of beauty which had hitherto, in a greater, or less degree, always partially pervaded his face, entirely vanished; and, in their place, the demon alone, stood terribly manifest, towering in all his infernal pride, and in the desperate glory and solitude, of his conscious, and incomparable atrocity.

My haughty spirit quailed; I felt myself shrinking, cowering, blasted: and, at last, I bowed submissively beneath the irresistible influence of this fell incarnation of every foul passion, of a stupendous pre-eminence of loathsome and abhorrent iniquity, which the merely mortal mind cannot even imagine. After a brief silence, during which, he continued to regard me with his thrilling and excruciating gaze of malefic exultation, he exclaimed,

"Farewell: we shall meet again: but *where?*"

If possible, his countenance assumed a darker and more hideous expression, as he uttered this final and emphatic question. But, while with a fascination which I could not surmount, I continued to pore upon his terrible features, again a fierce, and vivid flash momentarily blinded me: and when I recovered the faculty of sight, the evil, and accursed being had disappeared.

Then, a vast weight was suddenly removed from me; the air seemed to become again respirable, and though I do, and ever shall, believe, that I had *not* been asleep, yet I felt as though I had awakened from a heavy and terrific dream. I gazed anxiously around me. My sister was still reposing tranquilly; no trace of uneasiness was on her countenance; and while I had been enduring all the tortures of the bad, she had been experiencing the comparative peace, which those who possess the virtue of resignation never fail to secure for themselves, even under the pressure of the direst calamities. Again the evils which she was destined to encounter so speedily, arose before me in all their fearful magnitude; and again I felt that I was the sole cause of all the privations and sufferings she must inevitably undergo, *unless* ——

I trembled no longer to regard this dark alternative; on the contrary, I considered it fixedly, exultingly. The denunciation of the fiend still rang in my ears: and I deemed myself a doomed man. All the fell passions of my nature were rioting within me. I thought, "If I am *ordained* to pursue a course, why should I vainly and ingloriously struggle against that

which is inevitable?" Again, I repeated to myself, "I am a doomed man!"—And I felt as though fate had done her worst against me; as though the seven angels had at once poured upon me all the vials of God's wrath; "and I was scorched with great heat, and gnawed my tongue for pain."

Despair, the love of self-preservation, and the ravenous craving for revenge, all co-operated to urge me to one identical goal. The interview with the fiend, the agitations which I had endured, and the general tenour of my previous reflections, had imparted to my mind a delirious exaltation, a species of infernal enthusiasm. I seemed to feel myself above all common thoughts and actions; and even to thirst for the commission of some dark and daring, some incomparably exciting, and execrable deed. The weakness of the body served but to accelerate this unnatural insubordination of the spirit; and I was like a piece of machinery from which a retarding countervail has been removed. It is well known that, when the corporeal system is debilitated, the slightest stimulus will create ebriety; and, but for a corresponding reason, my mind had probably never entirely obtained its present bad eminence of drunken disorder.

I said to myself sternly and determinately, "My father shall not live. The ties of blood exist between us, it is true; but, I know where there is a blade that can sever them. Once cut the knot, and he *is* no longer my sire; no matter what he *was*. Parricide is but a name; and I have borne enough of deeds to make me insensible to the obloquy of words. But, happen

what may—come crime, shame, punishment, and death—he and I shall no longer infect the same atmosphere. One stroke will I give to secure my future freedom; a second, to save my sister from destruction; and a third, to revenge my wrongs."

While these thoughts were rapidly passing through my mind, I arose in my bed. I gazed scrutinizingly on my sister: still she slept. I seized the lamp, and approaching it to her, passed it before her eyes. But she awoke not; and I was satisfied that her repose was profound. Then, with a violent effort, I extricated myself from the incumbent coverings, and alighting on the ground, directed my feeble and tottering steps towards the armory. With infinite difficulty and exertion, I at length, attained it; and exultingly seized the Assassinien dagger. In tremulous haste I was then withdrawing; when, attracted by its glittering reflection of the rays of the lamp, my eye rested upon the blade of the Oriental axe. Instantly, as much in a sanguinary love of the formidable weapon, as in a determination not to miscarry in my enterprise, for the want of a sufficiency of arms, I resolved to bear it with me; though my strength would scarcely enable me to support myself.

Then, I turned my steps in the direction of my father's chamber. My heart beat quickly; my limbs trembled; and my knees smote each other: yet, no trace of hesitation entered into my mind, and I dreamt not of departing from the fulfilment of my purpose. But, as I traversed the long corridor, that communicated with his apartment, I became so exhausted, that

I was compelled to pause, and to sustain my sinking body on the balustrade that formed one side of the gallery. On this I rested as though glued to it; so completely enfeebled, and breathless, by the exertion I had already undergone, that, for some minutes, I made repeated but fruitless attempts to resume my career; yet, never for one single instant, did I harbour an idea of abandoning my project. No—I was immutably bent upon murder; the determination I had adopted was the consequence of no transient impulse: it gradually arose in the general tenour of my thoughts during many previous months; was encouraged by reflection, fortified by hatred, accelerated by opposition, and confirmed by aggression. A sentiment thus founded, could not but be permanent; I felt that nothing could divert me voluntarily from my course; and my nostrils seemed to pine for the scent of blood—for the blood of my sire.

Sustaining the dagger, and the axe, in one hand, with the aid of the other, and the support of the balusters, I contrived to drag my emaciated frame as far as the door of his chamber. Then, the apprehension of being unable to raise the latch without a sound, occasioned such a trembling of my limbs, that, for some moments, it seemed that my panic would prove the very cause of the result, the mere thought of which had originated it. And my expectations were but too accurately fulfilled. Urged, at last, alike by my fell impatience and by the fear of being accidentally observed by some menial eye, in my present suspicious

situation, I laid my enervated hand upon the intractable lock. After a few moments' fruitless attempt, it yielded unexpectedly to my uncertain and irregular pressure, and returned the quick, sharp sound I had so intensely dreaded.

In the agony of my apprehension, my forces then suddenly deserted me; and, had I not seized upon some of the carved work of the wall, I should have fallen on the earth. But, while I thus sustained myself, the door emancipated from its fastening, slowly and spontaneously opened; and at last exposed to my anxious gaze, the principal portion of the interior of the chamber. Then, my craving thirst for blood, experienced the wolfish triumph of discovering that my father was asleep. His face was turned towards the spot on which I stood: the light of the night-lamp shone full upon it; and distinctly could I discover every feature of his countenance.

I advanced a few slow and silent, though staggering paces, into the spacious apartment, my eyes immoveably fixed upon his closed lids: and then, again, a feeble thrill of sanguinary exultation pervaded my whole being. But, at this moment, my strength entirely, and finally failed me; my trembling limbs yielded beneath my weight, and I sank slowly and noiselessly on the floor. In vain, after a moment's tranquillity, I struggled to rise; the effort was fruitless. At last, conscious that my physical forces were rapidly diminishing, I desisted from all further attempts to recover my footing; but, softly placing the axe upon

the floor, and securing the dagger in the apparel of my breast, I slowly and gently advanced upon my hands and knees, until I reached the bed.

Then, while I gazed upon the sleeping countenance of him that I so loathed, and thought that, at length, the tyrant was in the power of his victim, that the oppressor was now at the mercy of the oppressed, and that the revenge of all my hideous wrongs was within my grasp, a flood of savage triumph rushed upon me with an overwhelming force; and I delayed, for a few moments, to deal the final blow, in order that I might fully enjoy the thrilling sense of our relative change. And as I looked upon him again, and reflected that beneath me, was the mouth that had vilified me, the arm that had threatened me, and the eye that had flashed in wrath against me, I repeated to myself, "Mercy? *He* the oppressor, at the *mercy* of the oppressed? What could have suggested to me the *word?* When has *he* ever shown mercy to me? When I humbled myself before him, he spurned me; when I sought to propitiate him, he contemned me; when I offered him the affection of a son, and the gratitude of a Christian, he discredited me contumeliously; and, when I strove to turn him by intimidation, into the path he ought to have followed, he defied and defeated me, at my own weapons. Gray-headed old man! Obdurate father! as well might you expect mercy from a starving hyena, as seek it from the child you have ruined. *You* are the cause that now I stand over you, a sinner beyond the grace of redemption; and verily you shall have your reward. *You* are the traitor to

God and to nature, that has driven me without the pale of salvation, the tyrant that has taught me to bite; and verily, you shall be the first victim of my recklessness, the first object of the trial of the sharpness of my fangs. Stern egotist! fierce oppressor! hitherto, you have dealt to me remorselessly your ruthless laws; henceforth, you shall receive them from me.—And now, for their first and last enactment—which shall be merciless as your own, and, at least, as impressive—for, it shall be written *in your heart!*"

As I thus concluded my truculent reflections, I raised the dagger; for a moment, it hung suspended in the air, while I collected all my remaining strength, and determined my aim. Then, the weapon descended;—but, not for the fulfilment of my atrocious intention; for just as its course had commenced, my arm was caught in an iron grasp, and springing rapidly from his bed, my intended victim furiously closed with me, and attempted to disarm me.

In the sudden burst of frantic wrath, which this defeat of my dearly cherished vengeance, in the very moment of its apparent execution, occasioned me, and in the instinctive fear of the doom, which I now anticipated, I acquired sufficient force to resist his attempt to wrest the dagger from my grasp. When the struggle commenced, I was upon my knees, but, I was quickly prostrated; still however, I did not abandon my hold, and, on the floor we rolled, father and son, limb intertwined with limb, in a combat for life, or death!

But, speedily was the strife decided; the preterna-

tural strength with which my fury had supplied me, departed; when, my father taking from my unresisting hand, the formidable weapon, and setting his knee on my chest, pinioned me to the earth. In the following moment, all trace of the slight animation which our contest had occasioned, departed from his countenance; and it resumed its habitual expression of diabolical irony.

"So, young roister," he said, "your affection has prompted you to visit me at a most unusual hour. But, what can prove an obstacle to the ardour of filial love? Yet, I dare be sworn that you did not expect so cordial a reception. But, I have been a whelp myself; and now, am in the plenitude of my maturity; possess consequently, a double wisdom, and know equally the tricks of both your craft, and of my own. Be not surprised then, my ruffling youth, if the wily old lion have chanced to prove more than a match for the wild anticks of his sorry cub."

Oh, how the accursed voice, and its too familiar tones of mingled scorn and malignity, stung me in that moment! I was almost suffocated by exhaustion and by the pressure of his weight upon my chest, yet, I contrived to gasp in impotent fury,

"Old man! impenitent—ruthless—evildoer! wolfish—fiendish father! I loathe—and still defy you!"

"You are unjust," he calmly replied in his wonted manner, "I have not yet given you sufficient cause for so unusual a degree of antipathy. That son and sire should be discordant, is an established custom of the world, and therefore, a certain extent of hostility

is proper and venial in people of our station and pretension; but, you are somewhat of a latitudinarian, and, in sooth, carry this privilege rather too far. If you compare me with others, you will find that I have proved neither a very neglectful, nor a very stern father. The Sacred History records an instance of a parent, who, in a famine, boiled her son and ate him. Comparatively with *her*, I think you will admit that I have been an excellent relative."

"Tyrant!" I cried, "cold-blooded tyrant! how shall I rouse you into wrath—how exasperate you into a desire for vengeance?—Oh, would that your hatred were equal to mine, you would not debase yourself by the employment of these ignoble sarcasms, but entertain the passions of a man, and despatch me at once!"

"Why to reveal to you a secret, my son," he deliberately rejoined, regarding me grimly, "I will confess to you that, I believe, I abhor you, almost as much as you abhor me, although I am not quite so turbulent in the expression of my hostility. And now, to prove to you that, for once in my life, I have spoken to you with sincerity."

And he immediately added with some degree of natural energy,

"So honestly do I detest you, so cordially do I resent your cowardly assault of this night, that, unless you sue to me for my mercy; address to me a contrite, and a lowly prayer for your life, humiliate yourself utterly; abjectly, before me, by the heaven that is above me, your earthly career shall instantly terminate!

"Let it!" I huskily replied, setting my teeth, in the extremity of my wrath, and desperation; "let it! I would rather die a daily death until the end of time, than voluntarily be again indebted to you for my life!"

"Wild brute!" he cried, "think again; be advised, descend from this mere animal ferocity into submission and penitence, and perhaps, I may yet spare you!"

"Tame devil!" I replied, "arise from *your* hellish apathy into the passions of humanity, and give me the only boon I seek at your accursed hands—destruction. *This*, I court, I crave—and, to stimulate you into compliance, again hurl into your teeth, my eternal defiance, and abhorrence!"

"Have then, your wish, sorry, sullen fool!" he savagely rejoined.

And raising the dagger to the full extent of his arm, as though he were about to deal with it, a blow which would require his utmost force, he added in a quick, fierce tone of concentrated wrath,

"Even as Ehud slew Eglon, I will see whether I cannot find in thy wretched carcass, a tomb for both blade, and haft!"

But the expected blow did not follow this vengeful threat; the weapon still remained suspended in the air; and, after another moment's hesitation, he threw it away from him, exclaiming,

"No, thou Pandora's box, I dare not carve an opening into thee. I myself might fall the first victim of the pestilences I should emancipate. Keep

then, your demons imprisoned in your breast, to gnaw and banquet upon your own heart; *I* will bore no hole in it, to let out fresh evils upon an already too suffering world. Live then; for, to live, to you, will prove far worse than to die. Live therefore, my gentle son, to be *your own hell.*"

He then added, after a momentary pause,

"And yet however punished in mind, surely you ought not to escape altogether scatheless in body?—One owes a duty to self, as well as to others; and I feel that, in common justice, I am bound to grant you some little corporeal, palpable memento of your attempted parricide; some trifling mark that you may bear with you to your grave; and which, during your subsequent life, may never cease to remind you condignly of the gratitude of an aggrieved parent."

At this moment, I observed that his eye, as mine had previously been, was attracted by the reflection of the rays from the lamp playing upon the glittering blade of the axe.

"A judgment!" he cried. "'So they hanged Haman on the gallows, which he had prepared for Mordecai. Then, was the King's wrath pacified.' And why may not the axe which you must have brought hither, for a parent's murder, be made the instrument of that parent's vengeance?—It shall; and then; *my* wrath will be pacified. You once said with your wonted, filial, and partial affection, that mine, was the spirit of the tiger: I now believe you were right. My heart, at this moment, is burning; and I feel that it can only be slaked by blood."

He withdrew a few steps from me, in the direction of the axe; and then paused, to see whether I should attempt to avail myself of my emancipation. But, my strength was utterly gone; and though *he* had left me, exhaustion and sickness still pressed upon me with even a more insurmountable weight. Instead of any longer possessing the power of motion, I required the exertion of all my faculties to protect myself from fainting.

Observing my torpor, my father advanced a few more paces, seized the axe and resumed his place at my side. I was lying upon my back; my arms were extended upon the floor, a considerable space intervening between each of them, and my body. Upon one of them, he set his foot; and then, said,

"I have already more than once told you, that I have not given you sufficient cause for the enmity you bear me, as *yet;*" and he laid a diabolical emphasis upon this brief, but in my present critical situation, infinitely expressive word. "Now, however, I will confer a boon upon you; for *now*, I will endow you with the power of cherishing your hatred, with some pretence of justifiableness.

He regarded me with a piercing gaze of triumphant, yet unimpassioned malignity. But, in the ensuing instant, the whole expression of his countenance abruptly changed. All its cold, phlegmatic, withering malevolence entirely disappeared; and an intense gleam of grim, wolfish fury shot from eyes half buried beneath a brow that overhung them like a penthouse; the teeth were set; the lips extended; the nostrils di-

lated; and every grisly feature denoted the sudden mastery of fell, and sanguinary wrath. Grasping the glittering axe in both hands, and holding it menacingly over my prostrate body, he vociferated in a thundering burst of fierce invective vehemence,

"Bloodshedder! in intent, if not in deed; blood-red—blood-guilty! in heart, if not in act: Parricide! in will—receive a father's meet acknowledgment for such gentle mercy as you would this night, have fain accorded *him!*"

As he thus spoke, he swung the fatal weapon high in the air; and then, like Moses, ere he slaughtered the Egyptian, "he looked this way, and that way, and when, he saw that there was no man," the trenchant instrument of his foul ruthlessness, descended. I felt a sharp and painful thrill, a transient sensation of numbness, and then I saw the ensanguined axe quivering in the floor, between my left arm and left hand, which it had divided at the wrist.

I experienced neither dismay, nor regret; every less emotion was entirely absorbed in the all predominant one of wrath, in the maddening consciousness that *he*, the author of my existence, but for whom I had never been, and subsequently, the cause of all the evil I had endured and perpetrated; that *he* who ought to have been *my* victim, should yet have enjoyed the triumph of inflicting upon me, this atrocious bereavement! Severe, and ghastly as was my wound, owing probably, to the extreme debility of my frame, and the consequent feebleness of the circulation, it bled but little; and pressing as forcibly as I could with the other hand

the mutilated limb, I darted at the fierce executioner of this lawless deed, glances of unvanquished hostility, and defiance.

The fire and the energy which had possessed his countenance now rapidly departed from it; and again it assumed its wonted expression, more chilling and more gloomy than even the aspect of the dark and frozen lake beneath us.

"You need not scowl so grimly," he said calmly; "I freely admit that as long as you have a particle of life remaining to you, you will sting—if you can. Well—this conviction does not augment my antipathy to you. I hate a craven. Besides it would have been a mere idle waste of her stock, if Nature had supplied you with *every* earthly vice; not one plebeian fiend below, but knows that you have a sufficiency to ensure your destruction. Your doom is written, my son; it is matter of record, a theme of common topic, throughout the whole of Hades. But, you do not deign to reply? You are as mute to me, as was the concubine,—'who was fallen down at the door of the house, and whose hands were on the threshold,'—to her master when he addressed her. Yet, now, I say to you, in the Levite's words, 'Up! and let us be going!'"

To this inhuman gibe, in spite of my increasing wrath, I made no reply; and my father consequently added, after a moment's silence, pursuing his citation,

"'*But none answered!*'"

Again he paused; and then resumed, with his wonted expression of infernal and phlegmatic sarcasm,

"Yet perhaps, if I were to continue my imitation of the Levite's example, and take a knife and begin to divide you, as he did his concubine, 'into twelve pieces, to send you into all the coast of Israel,' you might recover sufficient speech to bid me farewell."

Then, in the wild, fierce ire of my heart, I *did* recover sufficient speech to exclaim almost maniacally,

"Father! fiend! hear me—be advised—be not so fatally desperate as to leave your butcher's work unfinished—or, I forewarn you, you may yet live to rue its commencement!"

For some moments, he gazed scrutinizingly and silently upon me; then said, with an unwonted degree of solemnity,

"We are both bad men; and a certain extent of self-knowledge might have rendered me lenient, and commiserating to your moral infirmities, had you pursued a different course towards me. But, even in your earliest youth, instead of manifesting an affectionate demeanour, instead of attempting to propitiate me, to attract to yourself the love which I know was not redundant in me, but which might, perchance, have been fostered by docility and submission, you ever stood aloof intractably, rebelliously. And even, if you ever did make an advance to effect a less stern state of mutual relation, you approached not meekly and frankly, but gloomily and proudly, with an air of fitful, sullen condescension, almost, of patronage.

Think not, however, that I am seeking to justify myself in your eyes; I contemn your judgment, as much as I now disregard your affection. I am but disburdening my feelings of the weight which oppresses them; making a self-confession, not soliciting your suffrage. I regret some passages in my previous life; but *not* the act which I have last perpetrated: on the contrary, I should have *regretted* had your aggression escaped without a memorable retribution. You chose to play a sanguinary game, and you chance to have lost it; you sought to fell a bramble, and the thorns have made you bleed: but yourself alone, therefore, must you blame for this result. As for your threats, I treat them with the scorn which they have always excited in me; earth contains not the iron, with which you will ever injure me: but, the next time you make the *attempt*, take care that the *latch* shall be *noiseless*."

During this speech, my exhaustion had rapidly increased; and, when he concluded, I could not speak; I could not even move; but, I turned my eyes in the direction of the axe, which still stood transfixed in the floor, and then regarded him with a significant and menacing expression. I saw that he understood the purport of my look, which he scornfully met, and sustained, with an equally unflinching gaze of stern hostility and defiance. In that moment, it wanted but some conspicuous natural indication of the close extent of our affinity, to have rendered this interview and scene, the very perfection of the terrible, even to a ruffian as obdurate and sanguinary as ourselves.

I watched him steadily as he advanced to the door of the chamber; but, the instant he disappeared, all my energies recoiled from their almost superhuman tension. The wild wrath which had hitherto constituted my support deserted me; and the body at last obtained dominion of the mind. I felt as though my whole being were collapsing; and I scarcely had the power to cast one parting look upon my mutilated arm, ere darkness came upon me, and I swooned.

THE PARRICIDE.

PART THE THIRD.

HITHERTO, I have portrayed the fortunes of a being endowed with an even morbidly sensitive capacity for every species of natural pleasure; but, debarred by external circumstances from the attainment of it. *Now*, I have to narrate the exact contrast: to depict myself in the amplest possession of all I once most coveted; but, precluded by internal causes from the enjoyment of it.

Three years succeeded the termination of the incidents which I have narrated in the previous part; during which, life and death almost equally contended for the possession of my mutilated being. At last, the former obtained a feeble, and a fatal victory.

I lived; yes, I suppose that I must say, I *lived;* for, I moved, and I ate; and I presented to the eye, the ruins of the human form; but, in this, began, and end-

ed my affinity to my kind. I constituted no longer part and parcel of this world; neither its joys, nor its sorrows, its blessings nor its pains, continued to exert their natural influence upon me. The materials of pleasure were around me; but, I was like a wasp in a beautiful garden; and the pernicious insect might as easily have extracted honey from the flowers, as I have found any quality of mitigation in the possession of those earthly advantages, which are the objects of the ambition and cupidity of the generality of men.

The remarkable succession of calamities which my body had endured, had induced a series of disorders which ultimately terminated in that frightful derangement of the vital functions, which is called atrophy. Daily, hourly, I was gradually perishing; but, with a fearful slowness. I felt myself thus lingeringly wasting away; yet, possessed no power of prevention. My frame was a skeleton; its integuments were, I may say, in portions almost diaphanous; nevertheless, I could not convey to it more than just a sufficient nourishment to maintain the feeble union of soul and body. After a time, I lacked not a craving for the usual sources of physical vigour; I ate and I drank; but, still I prospered not.

And in what condition was my mind during this state of animal depression, and decay? It raged like a volcano. As its tenement grew more feeble, its rebel violence increased in strength. But the traitor turned all its arms against itself. Two passions alone occupied it; regret for the past; and an endless thirst for vengeance upon the author of my ruin. Every time,

I cast an accidental glance upon my emaciated frame, and my mutilated arm, a hell of hatred arose within me: and cheerfully, oh how cheerfully, would I not have perished in that moment, could I but have possessed the power of forcing my father to accompany me into perdition!

And yet, during the greater portion of this long period, I pined for light, though I moved in darkness. I entertained the strong desire to enter the path of amendment; but, I lacked the power. To *know*, and to *do*, to *conceive*, and to *execute*,—how vast the difference between these seemingly respondent terms!—I felt the course I *ought* to have pursued; but habit was too strong for me. I had been so long accustomed to the entertainment of turbulent emotions, and the unbridled indulgence of their impulses, that, though I was conscious of the pangs they occasioned me; and that they had entailed upon *me* far greater sufferings than on the objects of my enmity, yet I could not acquire the resolution to forego them at once, and to enter straightways into the paths of resignation and peace. I was not yet sufficiently tried in the furnace, sufficiently chastened, and disciplined by misfortune, to succumb voluntarily; and, by an abandonment of my previous course, thereby pronounce my sense of its guilt. Even now, *that* day has not yet arrived; my eyes are not yet thoroughly opened; the leaven of my past errors still sits upon their lids; and I fear, and feel, that, in the moment in which I am writing, I cannot see, save under the influence of some degree of self-delusion.

At the time, however, to which I am alluding, I was far too haughty and intractable, to acknowledge even to myself my own fallibility: in my most compunctious moments of introspection, I was ashamed to admit that, during the great majority of the previous passages of my life, I had been as much in fault as, if not more than my opponents. I persisted, in spite of the better promptings of my conscience, in regarding myself as one guiltless; as one only sinned against, not sinning. In fine, I wilfully and resolutely continued to view myself as a sort of martyr to the infirmities and vices of those to whom capricious fortune had perversely delegated the power of regulating my destiny; and thus, seemed to justify my maintenance of the infernal hostilities which I had so long indulged.

Yet, to such an extent, was my mind enervated that, even these passions, of regret, and revenge, potent as they generally are when once they have secured a victim, were fitful with me. I possessed no longer the faculties of permanence, or stability; every emotion, every impulse, was more or less transient; I could pursue no object consistently. One only feeling never deserted me;—the sense of uneasiness, the consciousness of anguish. To this, I adhered with an unwavering, a merciless fidelity; but every other, was temporary, and unenduring.

In tracing however, the picture of a disordered mind, I have neglected the current of events. After our separation, my father had commanded a domestic to acquaint my sister, that an accident had occurred to me in the armory, and that her presence was essen-

tial. In obedience to this intimation, she instantly flew to afford me her assistance; found my prostrate body, and by immediately applying styptics and dressings to the wound, prolonged my life for the commission of fresh calamities. What were her feelings upon the first discovery of my mutilation, I need not attempt to describe; they can be imagined, and I could do no more than paint them from conjecture, for I was senseless during their ebullition. But, it is remarkable that *no* explanation ever occurred between us respecting this bereavement. Many, many weeks elapsed before I regained sufficient strength to converse; and then, she asked no questions concerning it, or even alluded to its occurrence. Even at this moment, I know not whether she was ever acquainted with the true cause of my maim; yet, her unbroken silence on the subject, naturally leads me to suppose that she was only too accurately informed; though the merciless perpetrator of this deliberately sanguinary deed, had himself intimated to the domestics, that it was the result of an accident.

And now I have to relate a circumstance, which caused me, during a brief period, some slight alleviation of my pangs. On the morning following the night of our encounter, my stern destroyer disappeared. As soon as I had recovered sufficiently to be made acquainted with his departure, I recollected that, on that memorable occasion, he had bidden me, *farewell;* though I then little dreamed that an expression which I supposed only to have been employed as

one of his many insulting gibes, really indicated the approach of an occurrence so utterly unexpected.

Subsequently to his departure, it was discovered that, during several previous weeks, he had been making preparations for it; but, they had been executed so secretly, that neither my sister, nor any other member of our household, save one favourite menial whom he had taken with him, had any suspicion of either his proceedings, or of his intention. Thus, probably, he had never purposed to fulfil his threat of expelling us from his house, but only to render us miserable by the anticipation of an expulsion. Consequently, could I only have governed my wrath, for one single night, I might perhaps, have escaped all the evils which were the consequence of its indulgence: a galling reflection which never failed to excite in me an insupportable increase of acerbity.

Many months elapsed after the departure of my father. A year expired: yet still we heard no news of him, or could form any conjecture of the objects of his mysterious disappearance. Our pecuniary resources were rapidly diminishing; and my sister, who, in consequence of my incapacity, superintended the whole of our domestic arrangements, was beginning to apprehend the addition of poverty to a catalogue of calamity already redundant. At this period, I received a letter, addressed to me, by an individual resident in the metropolis. It stated, very laconically, that, not having heard from my father during a considerable time, and having sufficient reason to believe that he was dead, he felt himself authorized to pay me

in future, the revenues of a large foreign estate which he had possessed on the shores of the Mediterranean. It added that my father, when he left us, had in fulfilment of a long contemplated, and cherished project, gone immediately to Southern America for various ornithological, and generally scientific, purposes; and that, from letters which had recently been received, it was supposed that he had fallen a victim to the plague, which was at the present time, violently raging in Mexico.

Shortly afterwards, the purport of this communication was strictly realized; and thus, from impending poverty, we were raised, not to comparative, but, to actual affluence.

It may be inquired what were the sentiments created in me by this intelligence of the conjectured death of my father. Regret:—regret that the object of my immortal wrath had escaped the destruction I had intended for him. What was to me wealth?—what were to me the amplest possessions? distinction, magnificence?—What compensation were they to me for the loss of the sole desire of my existence, the sole hope that still remained to me?—The means of worldly enjoyment, and sway, had arrived to me, just as I had become deprived of the faculties of appreciating them. Body and mind were alike devoid of the capabilities of pleasure; the organs that enable us to elicit it, were departed from me for ever.

Riches and independence therefore, so inestimable a blessing, so proud an object of desire, to the young, the healthful, and the ambitious, were to me but a

poor equivalent for the extinction of the only passion of my life. Consequently, the sole satisfaction their acquisition afforded me personally, was negative; insomuch as they protected me from the evils which must have been concomitant on the want of them. But, chill, and stagnant as were all my affections, I still retained sufficient interest in my sister, to rejoice on *her* account, in this security from impending poverty, and accession of the means of recreation, and enjoyment to her. While however, I entertained these feelings for her sake, I endeavoured to mitigate my own regret and disappointment by the reflection that the rumour might be false, and my enemy might be still alive; though I could not conceal from myself, the little probability of any agent incurring the responsibleness of devoting to me, the possession of so large a property, unless previously certain that I had inherited it by the death of its owner.

Whenever this panic apprehension entered my mind, I entertained a feeling of impotent wrath, and malice which defies description. The old, and barbed thought that he, the author of my ruin, the cause of my eternal ban, was to go scathless into his grave, never ceased to exert its pernicious influence over me, and to excite me into a state verging upon insanity. In those moments, the past arrayed itself before me, with a fearful distinctness; and then did I feel, in spite of all my partial sophistry, in the acutest degree, the misery of being compelled to look back upon an ill spent life. None but the regretful, yet still impenitent sinner can understand the poignant anguish,

which the recollection of the lost hours, days, months, years occasion. Then, every error in our course, arises with a terrible conspicuousness, until we turn heart-sick, but, unamended, from the dark, despairing contemplation.

And such, with me, was the usual termination of a retrospect of this nature; which, instead of benefiting my future career, by rendering me painfully sensible of the wickedness of my past life, only tended to make me still more exasperated against the destroyer of the prospects of happiness which it had once presented to me. And when, after a minute recurrence to every incident, in which, he had either thwarted, or oppressed me, my eye alighted, as it never failed to do, upon my mutilated arm, my wrath suddenly arose to its wildest pitch; and I instantly invoked every fell imprecation upon the head of the ruthless being who had wilfully blasted my earthly, if not my immortal existence.

When, most strongly under the dominion of these feelings, I used frequently to repair to the chamber, where hung the memorable picture of the infernal Medusa. And this habit was the cause of an incident, the recapitulation whereof, will convey some feeble idea of the extent to which my once iron nerves were shattered.

I was regarding meditatively this diabolical conception, or portraiture; for, I could not unequivocally determine which it was; and I was reflecting whether I could possibly have been under the influence

of delirium, or delusion, on the night whereon I held, or supposed that I held, communion with the fiend. So often had I vainly invoked, and defied his re-appearance; so often had I stood before this startling resemblance of his memorable features, and fruitlessly implored, and dared it to assume its incarnate form, that my mind sometimes misgave me, and I doubted whether I had not been deceived. Reproaches, prayers, praise, execrations, all had been profusely employed, and all with an equal want of success: the accursed object of my anxious infatuation, still remained a mere artificial combination of canvass and paint.

On the morning, one fiery sultry, summer morning, to which I am now alluding, I had been intently considering this dark pernicious mystery; had been alternately addressing to it homage and invective, adulation and contumely; had been, by turns, adopting every mode, my sense or frenzy suggested to me, as most likely to rouse it, into animation. At last, excited by my disappointments into a transport of ungovernable indignation, I exclaimed,

"False, lying fiend! you promised me revenge upon my oppressor; you promised me that I should bury this axe in his hated frame!" and I showed the weapon to the senseless object of my far more senseless apostrophe. "But, where is he now! in life, or in death, on earth, or in hell?—Answer me this question, and I will pardon you the treachery, you have hitherto practised against me."

Still the canvass remained inanimate; and the infernal work of the artist alone continued to scowl upon me.

"Now, hear me, devil," I cried, "I demand formally the fulfilment of your promise, even though the wheel be the consequence of my attainment of my heart's desire. Deny me, and demon as you are, and earth-born, clay-cooped as am I, I yet will find a mean to make you rue my malice. Grant me, however, my just claim, and I will be your votary, not only through the remainder of my life, but, in the world to come!"

And I trembled as I spoke; and lowered my voice; and looking furtively at the threatening sky, in the overwhelming fear of discovering some supernatural manifestation of the divine wrath. Nevertheless, in the following moment, I added quickly, in the rage, and despair of conscious crime, and pusillanimity,

"Do this, Belial, do this! and I will fall on my knees, and worship you!"

As I uttered my fearful profanation, the thick clouds opened, and a vivid flash of lightning cleft the dark sky from east to west, followed by an appalling crash of thunder. For an instant I was staggered; but, in the next moment, observing that the object of my impiety still refused to yield me any visible token of its consciousness, my wrath rose ungovernably within me; and, with one blow of the trenchant axe, dividing the picture from end to end, I fiercely exclaimed,

"Accursed deceiver! *now*, receive *my* revenge!"

And then, I leaped upon the canvass, and hacked and tore it, until it was reduced to the minutest shreds; and no portion of it, retained a trace of the detested image it had exhibited. But, in my excited fury, I was still proceeding in the work of demolition, when a flash occurred, far more vivid than the former; it filled the whole chamber with a livid, dazzling light, and was succeeded by a burst of thunder that rattled in my ears, shrilly and closely, like the discharge of an immediately contiguous battery.

I was suddenly, and irresistibly seized with a panic tremor. My senses were bewildered; my knees smote together; and I knew not were to turn to hide myself, both from my own terrors, and the apprehended vengeance of God upon my impiety. A storm almost unparalleled in violence in these regions had, now thoroughly commenced; and flash followed flash, and peal followed peal, in almost endless succession. I stood for an instant shrinkingly, crouchingly; my back bent, my face concealed in my hands, paralyzed by the excess of my dismay. Suddenly however, a still fiercer, and more terrific explosion of the elements, startled me into the re-possession of my corporeal faculties; but, at the same time, completely deprived me of all vestige of self-control, all sense of manly dignity. At once, and unreservedly, abandoning myself to the dastardly impulse that had unnerved me, I impotently fled in shame, and in fruitlessness had it pleased God to have overtaken me, before my own terrors; and ignominiously concealed myself in the darkness of the subterraneans of the mansion, until the tempest had departed.

At this period, three years had elapsed since the disappearance of my father, and one, since our accession to the princely revenue we now possessed. The incident I have just narrated, had increased, if possible, my already scarcely supportable aversion from our present abode. Still however, I lingered in it, during another six months; and then I proposed to my sister that we should make an excursion to our foreign estate, and, if it should realize our anticipations, settle ourselves upon it.

On the present, as on every similar occasion, this dear relative instantly, and cheerfully complied with my proposition; for ever since the hour, when I had become a confirmed, and incurable invalid, she had seemed to lose in her pity, all vestiges of that alienation or suspension of her affection, which my evil conduct had occasioned; and to regard me with a ceaseless tenderness, and vigilance.

With the restlessness which is the natural, and generally, the inseparable consequence of disease, I derived some satisfaction from the expectation of this change; thinking, with the customary delusion of sickness, that I should be better both in body and in mind, in the place where I was *not*, than I should ever have become were I to have continued in the place where I *was*. It is this insidious and invincible hope that impels the hapless valetudinarian into almost ceaseless locomotion.

A few days previous to our departure, I went accidentally into my sister's chamber, during her absence; when, to my great surprise, I discovered on the table,

a letter traced by a once beloved hand, whose characters could never be forgotten by me: I scarcely need add that I allude to Œnone. It was evidently written in reply to some letter or letters of my sister, in which she must have implored, and urged the advantages of, a reconciliation between herself and me; and narrated the state of my health, and the benefit I should derive from her forgiveness and kindness. But, Œnone unequivocally, and firmly, though mildly, after investigating and confuting my sister's arguments, declared her unalterable determination never again to encounter me voluntarily. "I had practised upon her," she wrote, "an outrage that she could not forget, though she might forgive it; and she would not, by a renewal of our intercourse, re-open wounds which had never been thoroughly healed."

In these sentiments, I recognised all the wonted firmness of Œnone, that never failed her, whenever she deemed she had a duty to perform. But, what was the effect her resolution, and its tone, produced on me?—I can scarcely describe it. I had ceased to love her; and yet, I was irritated that she should have acquired the power of pursuing so determined a course; and, apparently, of regarding *me* with as little affection as I entertained for *her*. Nevertheless, though I no longer possessed the passions of a lover, I still continued to feel a strong interest in her; and though sometimes, I experienced a transitory emotion of wrath in the recollection of the share she had had, in the production of my present state of wretchedness, yet generally my sentiments for her, were of the most ami-

cable tendency. I could not but be conscious that disastrous as had been to me, the result of her conduct, yet, it had originated in a most disinterested, though perhaps, mistaking, sense of rectitude and duty; and the more I contrasted it, with that of my father on the same occasion, the more charitable I grew towards her, while my implacability to him proportionately increased. But, my *love* for her was gone, utterly, entirely; rooted out by the sufferings of mind and body, which had not only destroyed all the generous and enthusiastic feelings of my nature, but rendered me incapable of ever again entertaining them.

From this description of my mental condition, it may be conceived that my discovery of the opinions contained in my cousin's letter, occasioned me no very violent mortification. And, in sooth, the slight pain they caused me to experience, was rather created by their assault upon my vanity, than upon my heart. Consequently, it required little effort to enable me to replace the letter where I had found it; and speedily to dismiss even the recollection of it from my mind.

In a few days after this occurrence, my sister and I began our departure from our native land. We proceeded to the nearest sea-port, where we had secured accommodation in a merchant vessel bound for the Levant; and, on a beautiful summer morn, commenced a voyage, which, we felt might probably terminate in spontaneous expatriation.

Great was my astonishment in discovering among the passengers, the person of Œnone. I gazed curiously upon my sister, thinking that this coincidence

might have arisen in a preconcerted arrangement; however, her ingenuous features quickly revealed to me that she was as much surprised as I was, by this strange encounter. When Œnone's eye alighted on my sister, her countenance testified both wonderment and the eloquent vivacity of an unexpected and glad recognition. This expression, however, was hastily followed by one of deep anxiety and alarm; and she gazed quickly and furtively around the vessel, as though she expected, yet dreaded, to encounter some object of terror or antipathy. My conscience too plainly told me the cause of this remarkable change of aspect; and, during a brief moment, entertaining a half unconscious and instinctive feeling of reluctance to her discovery of me, mechanically I attempted to retire to a less prominent station among the crowd. Speedily, however, I was relieved from this apprehension. When her glance arrived in my direction, it dwelt on me searchingly for a single instant; and then, without any indications of recognition, travelled on to an equally careful scrutiny of the individuals who surrounded me. She knew me not.

Instantly my mind assumed a different tone. My self-love, and self-estimation were pained by her forgetfulness; or rather, by this unequivocal proof of the vastness of the change which had occurred in my personal appearance. But soon, these thoughts were as speedily dispersed. A vacant seat was by the side of my sister; Œnone crossed the deck, and occupied it; and thus, I was again placed in contact with the being whom I had once loved with a degree of passion

bordering upon insanity. An affectionate greeting ensued between the friends thus strangely reunited: and a conversation composed of a mutual interrogatory, and examination commenced.

Œnone's story was told in a few words. Permanence of residence had long become impossible to her; she was perpetually craving and indulging her love of change of scene, until the desire had grown into a habitual necessity. She possessed considerable property in the neighbourhood of the port from which we had embarked; and, having resolved to make an excursion of some duration to a foreign land, was necessitated to visit her estate previously to her departure, in order to effect the due arrangements for its proper management during her absence. Here, she had heard of a ship being destined to sail to the Levant; and immediately determined to avail herself of this opportunity of avoiding the fatigues and dangers of a journey by land.

"And you," she added, still addressing my sister, "will now, in your turn, tell me, what object, and what strange fortune, has brought you into this most unlikely of all possible places of meeting. Surely, you, are not *alone?* You look at me significantly; but remember, that you are a mere girl, while *I*—am a full grown tree accustomed to the storm, an august dame of many summers, and, alas, many winters. Besides, I have with me, servants with whom I am accustomed to travel; and upon whose fidelity and activity I can rely."

I saw that my sister had observed with anxious in-

terest, that my cousin did not recognise me; and evidently doubted what reply to make to her inquiry.

Œnone detected her hesitation, and again nervously and anxiously directed her eye in quick succession to the passengers on the deck. But, her apprehension seemed to be somewhat allayed by her scrutiny.

"Why do you not answer me," she said; and then repeated, "Are you alone?"

"No—I am not alone," replied my sister; and perhaps, she might then have revealed my presence, but I darted at her an admonitory glance.

"Who then, is your companion?" demanded Œnone quickly; and she added in a tone of slight reproach, "how reluctant you are to answer me!"

"My companion is a gentleman," rejoined my sister, and she instantly continued in reply to her look of anxiety, "I understand your thoughts; but do not be disquieted, for he who accompanies me is one *whom you do not know.* I will find an opportunity of presenting him to you.

"Be in no haste," retorted Œnone, evidently relieved from a heavy apprehension, "be in no haste; I seek not to augment my society."

Their conversation then assumed a more familiar, and domestic turn; when I removed from their immediate vicinity, in order that a supposed stranger to the one, and a too intimate acquaintance with the themes of their discussion, to the other, might be no check upon the freedom of their intercourse. I so stationed myself, however, that I could examine Œnone minutely, without being myself conspicuously exposed to her observation.

She was changed; changed considerably, but, her beauty was far from entirely destroyed. Neither were any marks of age upon her fine features; no trace, no shadow of a trace, to reveal the hostility of time. The most frivolously profound practitioner in investigations of this nature, must have signally failed in any attempt to conjecture the extent of her years, from the aspect of her person: she might have reckoned any number not less than a score, and not exceeding thirty; but, a less general, and more accurate estimate, none could have made, save accidentally.

Though, however, she had escaped scathless from the hands of that destroyer, whom a poet describes as likely, some day, even "to throw a dart at Death, yet the ravages of care, or sickness, were but too visibly impressed upon her. She was pale, and thin; the extreme brilliancy of her complexion had deserted her; the tempered radiancy, the dignified, serene joyousness of her beaming countenance which had once so beautifully distinguished her, had entirely departed. She was still, it is true, an interesting, and lovely woman: but, to enable the beholder to form this opinion, his attention must have been directed to her by some extrinsic accident, or suggestion; for, she was no longer sufficiently striking to attract, and arrest it, by the mere force of her own charms. But, when the observer had once examined her intently, once rendered himself thoroughly familiar with her features, he might still have discovered in them, an inexhaustible mine of the gentler, but most bewitching fascinations.

At least, such was the impression she produced upon

me; for, I regarded her as an artist might have considered a beautiful picture. Yes, such was the feeling I experienced, after a separation of nearly four years, during this observation of the being who had once been my destiny. Not one thrill of passion did I entertain; not one accelerated pulsation of the heart did I endure; I neither trembled, nor hoped; rejoiced, nor lamented. Even the anger which she had excited in me, and which, as I have stated, occasionally though feebly recurred to me, was latent at that moment. Nothing stirred me; and, after the first emotion, occasioned by the suddenness of her appearance, I was as unmoved, and passive, as though I had never seen her. But, the feeling that was consequent upon my consciousness of this apathy, was a very different one; anger against my father, who had reduced me to it, who had entailed upon me so utter an annihilation of all human sympathy and sentiment, became for a moment the prevailing sensation of my mind.

These various, and discordant thoughts, at last occupied me so intently, that I ceased to observe Œnone and my sister. When I again awakened to a sense of the surrounding scene, I saw that the two friends had withdrawn from their former situation; and, stationed in the bows of the vessel, were conversing earnestly, and apparently, in a suppressed tone. I walked gently forward, and protected by an intervening sail, placed myself so that I could distinctly overhear every syllable of their discourse, though without being perceived by either of them.

"I repeat to you," said my sister, "you *ought* to

forgive him. You will find him an altered man, utterly, radically altered."

"Such," replied Œnone, "*I* shall never find him, for never again, I trust, shall I see him."

My sister faintly smiled; and after a moment's pause added,

"You are not aware of your fault, I believe, but I can aver to you that your hostility partakes of vindictiveness. His crime was great, I admit; yet you should remember that it arose in the magnitude of his love. None could have blamed him more severely than I did, at the time of the perpetration of his evil deeds: but, the agony of mind and spirit which he has since endured, has long disarmed all my resentment. Surely, you ought not to be more implacable? Nobody, too, knows more entirely than you, how much his early education has been neglected; and of all persons therefore, I repeat, you are the most called upon to regard his faults with lenity and toleration."

My sister spoke with fervor; and Œnone replied palliatingly,

"You mistake me much, my dearest friend, if you think I entertain any hostility to your brother. Certain passages have occurred between us, which render me unwilling ever again to resume my intercourse with him. But why should you be so ungenerous as to attribute this reluctance to antipathy? May it not arise in other, and less objectionable causes?"

"Let us not," said my sister, "discuss the *causes:* the *consequences* alone interest me. My brother is in tribulation; he has sinned, but he has been sinned.

against; he has erred, but I am sure that he is penitent. It is in your power to bestow upon him consolation; and I repeat that he is entitled to expect it at your hands. Will you, can you, then persist in refusing me who always so dearly loved you, and whom, you say, you love, this slight concession? Actuated as I am, by the affections of a sister, I own that it is difficult for me to form an impartial judgment; nevertheless, I firmly believe that I am under the influence of no delusion, when I say, that his sufferings have *entitled* him to your forgiveness; and that you will act *wrongly*, if you do not unreservedly and cheerfully accord it."

"You distress me greatly," replied Œnone, "by urging this most painful subject. Indeed, indeed, you know not how much it would afflict me to be compelled to refuse my compliance to any request you could make; but, the nature of this, renders a denial doubly grievous to me, Nevertheless, I cannot accede; I am no controvertist, yet, if I choose, I could supply you with only too many unanswerable reasons why I should persist in this apparently ungracious course. Let me, however, repeat that I entertain no aversion from your brother: he proved himself to be a being utterly dissimilar to that, which I had fancied him, and to that which I had loved; and from that moment, he became an object certainly not of hate, but of utter indifference to me."

And as she spoke, a deep sigh seemed to imply that her thoughts belied her words. She herself was perhaps suspicious of the impression which this ill-timed

manifestation of despondency might have made upon my sister; for she added quickly, and with a palpable assumption of unconcernedness,

"But, pray let us talk no more upon this most painful theme. Have you observed that pale sickly young man who has lost a hand, and who was sitting next to you, when I first accosted you? In spite of its emaciation, and its scars, there is something remarkably striking and interesting in his countenance. I wonder who and what he is: let us speculate upon his capacity, and vocation."

My sister smiled archly and significantly; yet, there was a tinge of melancholy in her smile, as though my personal deterioration was rendered still more painfully conscious to her, by the renewed and striking proof of it, which Œnone's question and remark had again afforded.

"Why do you smile," she said; "do you know him?"

Apprehending that my sister might answer in the affirmative, I resolved that I would forestall her discovery of me. Advancing therefore from my place of concealment, I presented myself abruptly, and conspicuously before them. Œnone slightly blushed; but, it was the faint blush which an apprehension of her conversation having been overheard by the stranger who was the subject of it, might have occasioned. I saw that she had not yet recognised me; and I gazed fixedly and remarkably, on her. Her attention was attracted by the continuity, and the significance of my observation: she regarded me earnestly: the flush of anxie-

ty then rose on her face; and she addressed to my sister a wistful and agitated glance.

"I told you, Œnone," I said, "what would be my fate if you persisted in your rejection of me. Have I proved a false prophet? But even *yet*, the end of the drama is not arrived."

"Is it possible, then, it is he!" she wildly exclaimed, ere I had concluded these few words; and staggering backwards, sank upon a seat.

I was pleased by this exhibition of emotion: but, my pleasure was not the frank, generous impulse of a lover, who believes that he has detected a proof of the unexpected reciprocation of his passion by its object. It was not even connected with this, or any similar feeling, but was a cold, morbid, selfish sensation that had its origin solely in vanity; which was gratified by the unequivocal conviction it had just attained of the great influence I still possessed over the mind, and probably, over the heart of a woman who had once been so dear to me, and who still might command the admiration of others.

I was not however so absorbed by these despicable thoughts as to have become incapable of observing Œnone. She continued to gaze upon me with a painful steadfastness, as though I had been the basilisk which had fascinated her; and her eloquent countenance impressively depicted a striking variety of contending emotions. Fear, anger, surprise, pity seemed successively to attain the predominance; but, mingled with these feelings, I thought I discerned indications of the softer passions of the heart.

"Do not shun me, Œnone," I said, "do not fear me; I was a serpent, once; but you heard my father say that he would 'draw my fangs;'—and he has fulfilled his pledge. I am harmless, innoxious, stingless—at least, for *you*. Let us not then live any longer in estrangement."

While I thus spoke, with mingled satisfaction, and a sense of humiliation, I saw the expression of sympathy and pity gradually grow more conspicuous upon her features. In a few moments, all vestiges of fear and anger had entirely departed from her countenance; and I beheld her eyes glisten with the moisture which her contemplation of my infirmities had excited.

"You are sadly altered," she, at length, mournfully replied, "never should I have known you, unless you had spoken; and perhaps even then, though I recognised the tones of your voice, the delusion occasioned by the change in your appearance was so strong, I should have distrusted the evidence of my ears, had you not attempted by the significance of your manner, to recall yourself to my recollection."

This speech was wormwood to me; and mentally praying that my father might prove to be alive, I resolved if I should ever again encounter him, to repay him amply all my many debts to him; but especially that, of a transformation in my external aspect so complete that it rendered me unknowable even to the being who might have been supposed to have been incapable of failing to recognise me.

Her serenity gradually returned; nevertheless, I saw, in the varying expression of her eye, in the occa-

sional but transient look of apprehension which passed like a cloud over her sunny countenance; that, many days of continued intercourse must elapse, before she could entirely, if ever, forget that I was the man who had once laid a hostile gripe upon her slender throat, had once brutally shed the blood of the innocent object of her strong attachment. But, an air of tenderness and pity strikingly pervaded her manner while she addressed me; and she seemed to be resolutely striving to merge the recollection of all the ills I had done her, all the evils I had perpetrated, in the interest and sympathy which the sight of my physical infirmities, of my once strong manhood suddenly converted into premature senility, could never have failed to excite in any truly feminine mind. These were the feelings that were passing within her; I traced them distinctly on her eloquent countenance; and increased bitterness and gall were the result of my discovery.

But, before even this first interview concluded, I discovered, though I can scarcely tell by what faint grades, that the conjectures which her previous demeanour had excited, were not unfounded; and that she still maintained the germe of her affection for me, in spite of all the endless efforts she had made to extirpate it. Yet, let *none* blame her; those who have experienced the overwhelming strength of this feeling will be merciful to *her* weakness in the consciousness of *their own;* while those to whom Nature has not accorded the organ, or the temperament which generates it, should neither vaingloriously triumph in their own

immunity, nor condemn another's submission to a dominion, the power of which they are both physically and morally devoid of the means of comprehending.

And what were my sentiments when our conference terminated, and I withdrew from this singular renewal of my intercourse with my once dear kinswoman? One alone was predominant; rage, furious rancorous wrath, against my father. I had just been in communion with the being I had adored with a devotion and sincerity that could not be surpassed; and yet, this most unexpected restoration to her society, occasioned me not even an emotion of pleasure. I had long been conscious of the final destruction of the chain that had once bound me to humanity; that I was, and ever should continue, an isolated being. But I had never hitherto felt so acutely as at this moment, that I was an enervated, prostrated wretch; that the soul of passion lay utterly dead within me; that its fires were eternally extinguished: and that, in lieu of a heart, I possessed ashes.

I looked this way, and that way, and every where around me, I saw human passions developed in all their boundless variety. This man laughed; that man frowned; a third, constitutionally a student, sat aloof from the crowd, reveling in the perusal of some favourite author. Another, the very type of indolence, and of animal content, was leaning over the side of the vessel, diligently engaged in an assiduous contemplation of the surface of the waters. The god of the portly beast that confronted me, manifestly resided in his sensual appetites; and by his side, with vacant,

lack-lustre gaze, as evidently vegetated an habitual drunkard. I saw another, with glittering eyes, furtively counting his gold in a corner, where he deemed himself unobserved; while the whole soul and being of his neighbour, were as clearly absorbed in the existence of a pale, feminine, delicate female, whose small head rested gently on his manly shoulder. Here, the inquisitive stripling indulged his insatiate curiosity; there, the tender mother vigilantly watched a careless and sportive urchin; and yonder dark, Eastern looking man, with the swarthy and turbaned brow, stationed in the bows of the vessel, and ever diligently gazing on the point in advance of our course, was manifestly pining to return to his native land, his hearth, his household gods, and his altars.

Yet, this was but a small portion of the sea of human emotion upon which I gazed: almost every variety of good and bad, of solemn and frivolous, of dignified and despicable, of egotistical and affectionate, was unequivocally developed before me. All this wide spectacle I considered attentively and minutely; and then, I looked into my heart: and I found not one respondent feeling. On the man that laughed, I gazed with fierceness, and with antipathy; for the sound of his merriment smote discordantly and painfully on my ear. And I said wrathfully to myself, *When will my* muscles ever again experience a like convulsion? A sudden and thrilling emotion of mingled bitterness and regret, was the only, but sad, reply, which this afflictive question obtained from me.

Then, in the full and fearful consciousness of my

desolation and my despair, I gazed wistfully on the sea, and the sky, there, to seek a diversion from my heart-breaking oppression. But I found in inanimate nature, no more respite from my sufferings, or even transient consolation, than the contemplation of my own kind had afforded me. I gazed intently on the elements, it is true; but they no longer consisted of the sea and the sky of my infancy, of my boyhood, of the days of my peace. I could scarcely force myself to believe that they actually were the identical objects which had once never failed to occasion me so lively a satisfaction, so exhilarating a feeling; which had contained the power of arresting my attention, and occupying my thoughts, during successive hours of then unvalued, but now, invaluable, happiness.

In that moment of despondency, I looked again upon Œnone; and I felt, with a thrill of unutterable anguish, that, for the rest of my life, I might be doomed to undergo that worst of mortal ills,—the possession of all that most should please, with the incapability of deriving from it, pleasure: that, henceforth, I should prowl over the face of the earth, a human being in form, yet an eternal outcast from the feelings and interests of humanity.

During our long and generally fortunate voyage, I was naturally frequently thrown into communion with my cousin; and never did I withdraw from her society, without entertaining a feeling of additional hostility to my father; without mentally hurling at his head a torrent of wrathful execrations. I could not forbear from ceaselessly picturing to myself the pleasure, the

ecstasy, I should once have derived from such an intercourse with her, as I now possessed; rendered almost unbroken by the narrow limits of our abode, and maintained upon the surface of the dancing waters, in the full free air, and beneath no roof but that of the broad blue sky. I thought upon the radiancy, the buoyancy of spirit, I should then have experienced under these circumstances: the endless delight, the enthusiasm, the rapture; the mollifying sentiments that this sense of happiness would have originated in me: I should have felt at peace with myself, and all mankind, and feelings of religion, and humanity, might have taken a permanent possession of my mind. But *now*, I looked into myself; and what did I find? A monstrous union of the stilness of the sepulchre, and the sanguinary ferocity of the tiger; an intellectual state, that displayed itself to my startled introspection, rank and stagnant, as the disinterred corse may show to the affrighted eye; yet, lurking beneath this dark, and death-like veil, existed all the restlessness, and all the ruthlessness of the living ruffian.

This was the fearful picture which a self-examination presented to my contemplation; but, far from being subdued and benefited by the consciousness of my crimes, it only rendered me more reckless: and more than ever determined to wreak my vengeance upon their author, if he had not found that sanctuary which could baffle even *my* hate, the *grave*.

Before our voyage had concluded, it was evident to me that Œnone had completely forgiven me. My sister, I was aware, was perpetually representing to her,

what I believe she really thought, that I was doomed; that my life was a flame which was already in the socket, which must speedily flash and expire. Perhaps, these repeated assertions, and the ghastliness of my appearance, conjoined to make a melancholy impression on my kinswoman; and to persuade her that the mere duties of common charity required that she should forget the delinquencies of a person from whom death would so speedily separate her: or perhaps, her sense of my guilt was too weak to contend against the ungovernable impulses of a blind and truly feminine affection. What was her real incentive, however, whether one, or both, I cannot determine; but, the result was, that she had resumed all the former tenderness and familiarity of her manner, in her intercourse with me; and evidently regarded me with a renewed, and strong interest.

Possibly, these feelings were not diminished in strength by her observation of my comparative indifference. She could not but have discerned that I no longer entertained for her, any of the fire of passion; and perhaps, as I retreated, she proportionately advanced. There is a wonderfully observant, but morally defective writer, still, I believe, in the prime of his career, who declares that, *En amour celui qui est gueri le premier, est toujours le mieux gueri;* and again, *Il est impossible d'aimer une seconde fois, ec qu'on a veritablement cessé d'aimer.** During my long and maddening tortures of mind and body, my

* Rochefoucauld.

love for Œnone had been gradually, and insensibly extinguished; and my reunion with her contained no creative power. It might have revived what had only been suspended, have recruited what had only been enfeebled, have resuscitated that which was merely dormant; but it could not raise a flame where there was no fuel, produce a flower where there was no seed, erect a superstructure where there was no base. Some effect it had certainly occasioned; it had softened my heart towards her, mitigated the asperity which the recollection of her share in the production of my present prostration of my mind and body, had always hitherto excited in me, and taught me to regard her again with feelings of kindness. Nevertheless, it could not reanimate that, which no longer contained the materials of existence; it could not, in fine, "make me love, a second time, that which I had truly ceased to love."

That Œnone was aware of this utter dereliction, that she perceived that the very principle of passion was entirely extinct within me, I do not suppose. Whatever the extent of her natural penetration, her own affections must have engendered a delusion which could not have failed to have prevented her from making this discovery. But she *must* have seen that I was not inspired by any passionate feeling; that I neither throbbed nor trembled when I approached her; that I exhibited no one symptom of ardent attachment. Yet, as in many even of the best of female minds, a something partaking of the attribute which is asserted to characterize the spaniel, occasionally exists; I believe, I repeat, that Œnone's conscious-

ness of the diminution of my passion, only stimulated her into a more open manifestation of the renewal of *hers*.

I have now, I imagine, made evident the nature of the communion between me and my cousin. Our mutual acts were not only coloured, but almost solely directed, by our recollections of the past: for the sake of that past, she still loved me; and for its sake too, though I could no longer love her, I yet endeavoured to atone for my involuntary caprice, by as consistent a manifestation of zealous and friendly attentions, as my uncertain temper would allow.

The consequence of this state of relation was, that when, at the termination of our voyage, my sister asked her to make our house her home, until she might desire to seek a residence for herself, or to resume her journey, Œnone gladly accepted the proposal.

However, I am now somewhat anticipating the current of events. Our voyage lasted many weeks. While off the coast of France, and the western coast of Spain, we were occasionally exposed to some rude weather; and whenever it occurred, my once dear, and still most interesting kinswoman, invariably nestled to my side for protection. In spite of my prostrated state, I derived some degree both of pride and pleasure from this indication of a sincere affection; and, in these moments, I always exhibited to her, an unwonted extent of kindness. By such, and other acts of a similar nature, which, perhaps, after my long illness, and the solitude consequent on it, were, in their novelty, peculiarly exciting to me, she fre-

quently contrived to elicit from me, a degree of cordiality which was not, I regret to say, fated to be of any very permanent duration.

At length, we reached the port of our destination.

Our house, and the grounds immediately appertaining to it, proved to be far more extensive, and beautiful, than we had even expected them to be. Nevertheless, this discovery occasioned me no pleasure; the hour for extracting it from any source, was irrevocably past.

Not only from the gardens, but from the mansion also, a most magnificent view of the Mediterranean was obtained. The former, however, had been ruinously neglected; yet I could see that they afforded means of scenic and picturesque effect which could not, perhaps, be surpassed by any spot in the whole world My father, I soon learned, had purchased this estate when a young man, and had resided upon it for a considerable time; in consequence of the facilities which it afforded him, for his communications with the East, and the Greek isles. Frequently, from this port, he would make excursions in the Levant; and return laden with those treasures of sculpture, and gems of art, which had subsequently so excited my admiration; and had made that indelible impression upon me, in my younger days, which had, doubtlessly, no inconsiderable share in the formation of my anomalous, self-tormenting character.

My father had retained this property, having secured so good a tenant for it, that it returned him a princely revenue. This man I found still in occupa-

tion of the estate. He was plain, and honest; entirely engrossed by his predial, and vindemial occupations, and, though wealthy, without any pretension to be considered superior to his condition. He was reputed an excellent farmer; and the ground bore ample evidence of the correctness of the valuation which the neighbourhood entertained of his skill.

From this individual, I learned by degrees, several particulars with regard to my father; who had evidently been but a wild character in his early days, and had left in this country rather a sorry impression. In one of his voyages through the Levant, he had fallen in contact, in the Archipelago, with a Tunisian corsair, laden with Christian slaves; whom the Africans had collected in their descents on different portions of the coast of Italy, and were conveying, for the purposes of sale, to Constantinople. The vessel in which my father was embarked, was manned, and armed by him; and, at his instigation, the captain of it, attacked the pirate. Animated by the reckless intrepidty of my parent, the assault was so fierce, and unexpected, that the Moors in spite of their savage, and habitual bravery, were speedily mastered. The Christians took possession of their prize; and then, they discovered that a noble Turk was on board, together with his sister and wife, who had embarked in the corsair, at Candia, in the intention of returning to his native land. One of these women was a Syrian, from Damascus; the other was an Egyptian. Both these fierce daughters of the sun were eminently beautiful, especially the latter; and both of them, consequently,

my father seized as his share of the plunder, and brought in triumph to his abode. My informant's account terminated by his avowal of his belief that in the Egyptian, I should revere a mother's memory; for that during her residence in this country, she bore to my father, a son, and subsequently a daughter, and died almost immediately after the birth of the latter.

This series of events, perfectly corresponded with those of the story I had always remembered to have heard in almost my earliest infancy, though I knew not where, nor from whom, that my mother was a foreigner, and died in consequence of an illness produced by the birth of my sister. Ever since therefore, the day on which I acquired the knowledge of these facts, I have entertained little doubt but that I must regard this fiery African as my mother, probably should trace to her hot, and perhaps fierce blood, the origin of the more turbulent qualities of my disposition; for, in my father, I could not fail to find the source of the darker, and more permanently sanguinary, features.

This tenant of ours occupied a small house in our immediate vicinity; having considered that wherein we now resided, and which belonged properly, and emphatically to the estate, as both too extensive, and too stately for him. It was consequently much out of repair; though on the receipt of the intimation of our intended visit, he had immediately done all that was requisite to render it habitable. But in that beautiful climate, mere necessaries are soon found to be most insufficient to the happiness of the wealthy,

and the indolent; both the mind and the eye speedily seem naturally to crave indispensably the accessaries of luxury and magnificence. In obedience to this common influence of that sunny land, we all, I mean, even Œnone and my sister, began to desire the improvement and embellishment of our abode.

This desire was effected with the rapidity which riches can always command. During a brief period, the superintendence of the proceedings, the ceaseless confusion and personal inconvenience attendant upon them, and the entire novelty of the occupation, all conspired to occasionally divert my thoughts from my misfortunes But, when our objects were completely attained, and the consequent tranquillity of the house was restored, and its commodiousness infinitely augmented, I instantly lost the slight alleviation I had experienced; and relapsed into even an increase gloom and discontent.

Then, therefore, in the attempt to give my mind a new impulse, and again to divert it from its slow and torturing process of self-destruction, from the frenzy of practising upon itself, the part of the vulture upon Prometheus, I frequently made, in company with Œnone and my sister, excursions to various portions of our extensive estate; and endeavoured to interest myself in investigating the condition, and in promoting the welfare, of the numerous peasantry who resided upon it. Yet, all my efforts were of no avail: whether my occupation were evil or good, it was ever equally ineffectual in mitigating the tortures of my mind; for, I wilfully cherished in my breast their fatal source, in the ceaseless sense of the demoniac hate

and implacability which I entertained for my father. Could I but have acquired the strength to have foregone these evil feelings, to have forgiven and forgotten the injuries I had sustained, and to have yielded to my fate with a pious and a Christian resignation, I now believe that even *then*, happiness might have returned to me. But such a great and exemplary course was far above the powers of my rebellious nature; and infinitely more willingly could I have parted with my life, than have abandoned my fiend-like hope of vengeance.

Unconquered, however, or rather, ever stubborn in my incapability of submission to any infliction, I still continued my attempts to divert my mind from the consciouness of its misery. At last, I resolved to imitate the favourite pursuit of my father, and devote all my thoughts and time to the collection of the relicks of ancient art; and adorning with them my gardens, render them a spot not to be paralleled in Europe.

In this intention, I endeavoured to excite myself into a feeling of ambitious enthusiasm; yet, I scarcely need add, vain was the effort. I determined, however, to proceed in the execution of my project. But, unfortunately for the chance of its ever producing any beneficial effect upon me, my health had recently so deteriorated, that I could not summon sufficient energy to fulfil my original intention of performing, as my father had done, a cruise among the Greek islands, and seeking myself the objects which I coveted. The consequence was, that I was compelled to commission agents to execute the plans I imagined; while I sat

down at home, in pernicious indolence, awaiting their return.

Œnone, and my sister, but especially the former, always greatly interested themselves in the execution of my schemes, and fantasies, however absurd, and trivial; their great object seeming to be to precure for me occupation, and consequently, solace. But whenever I observed Œnone peculiarly assiduous in this kind intention, peculiarly endearing, and fond, I used to feel the bitterness of a fiend; and be compelled to turn aside, to conceal from her the manifestations of my impotent malice, and wrath: for, in those moments, I was always most sensible of the ruin I had undergone, and of the happiness, the ecstasy, I should have derived from these dear tokens of her angel-like affection, *but, for my father.* Hence, originated the barbed thought that stung me into frenzy; and entailed upon my wretched existence, the double ban of suffering, at once, the pains of the present, and the worse tortures of the past.

The frequent repetitions of this thought, and the paroxysms of wrath which it occasioned me, at last began to operate upon me unfavourably respecting Œnone. I could not refrain from feeling that, owing to her presence, though most unintentionally and innocently on her part, I yet was subjected to the endurance of many a bitter pang, which otherwise I should most probable have avoided. Neither could I be insensible that, by the same cause, I was repeatedly instigated to contrast my existing state, and temper of both body and mind, with the elasticity, the buoyancy,

the delirium of happiness which I had experienced during our joint residence under my father's roof; and thus, to entail upon myself all the fruitless bitterness and anguish which a strong, but consciously unavailing regret can occasion. Such was the ineffable extent of the difference between my feelings at these two periods of my life, that those of the past seemed like a dream; and sometimes, I could scarcely persuade myself that the same man could ever have entertained both. But, there was another reason which acted almost as powerfully in the promotion of my distaste to her society.

Of all the tortures which my indomitable pride could sustain, the greatest arose in the exposition of my physical infirmities to the eye of any one who had known me in the health and the strength of my once vigorous manhood. In the case of Œnone, her whom I had so passionately loved, in whose eyes I would once rather have excelled than in those of the rest of the united world, I entertained this reluctance in the greatest possible degree; yet, all my stratagems I felt could not conceal from her that I was occasionally reduced to a state of almost infantine imbecility. Frequently, too, the deadly fits of faintness, to which I was constantly subject, would seize me in her presence; when, only by a most painful effort of both the moral and physical faculties could I withdraw from the room, before the cold and heavy sweat of a seemingly approaching dissolution would burst in huge drops from my forehead, and all the energies of mind and body become instantly and equally prostrated. In

those moments, a sensible, hideous weight and darkness were upon my brain and muscular powers; as though I were enveloped in some thick clinging veil, which, with an anaconda-like gripe, would heavily and suffocatingly embrace me, at once, within and without: an horrific feeling which I can only compare to that which a man may be supposed to endure, when, after having been entombed alive, he first awakens from his death-like swoon, in his coffin, with a dim, and uncertain consciousness that a couple of fathoms height of clay are piled above his devoted head.

But, powerful as were these reasons in their influence upon me, a third existed, which almost as strongly as the others impelled me to desire to be rid of the society of Œnone. Though *she* had both forgotten, and forgiven, *I* could not forget, that I had once laid a hostile hand upon her fragile form, once eternally disgraced myself before her. Whenever this thought occurred to my recollection, I found that my eye could not sustain the regard of hers; and, in spite of all my efforts, I felt myself visibly blench beneath the intolerable sense of my shame.

These were the united causes which at last insensibly instigated me to exhibit to her such a diminution of cordiality, that, at length, she could not fail to observe it. And yet, I ought not to speak as though this action of mine were a premeditated, and wilful one; it was, I may say, wholly instinctive. I found myself wretchedly and additionally uneasy; and gradually and almost unconsciously, this feeling rendered me repugnant to the society of her who was the inno-

cent cause of it. Daily, I became more frigid, and unbending to her; and daily increased the duration of my stay in the solitude of my own chamber, until, at length, I almost wholly absented myself from her society.

As I have stated, Œnone soon observed this alteration in my conduct to her. At first, she laboured, if possible, more sweetly and assiduously, than heretofore, to please and propitiate me; but finding, after a time, that I was resolutely intractable, she desisted from her fruitless attempts. From this hour, she became grave, and dejected; but, intermingled with her despondency, were plainly perceptible all the resignation and gentleness which never deserted her.

It was at this period, that I accidentally overheard a portion of a conversation between her, and my sister.

"Let me implore you," said the latter, fervently, "to alter your determination."

"No," replied Œnone, "I did not form it, you may believe me, without the most mature deliberation. I repeat to you, that I have watched him with the acuteness, and the pertinacity, and yet, with all the reluctance to acquire a painful knowledge, which affection can alone supply. And the result of my observation has been my conviction of his entertainment of a desire for my departure."

"You err—indeed, indeed you do!" cried my sister eagerly.

"No—no—no!" replied the other, slowly and impressively; "I am but too willing to entertain your

opinion, to believe that I can have embraced a contrary one, upon deceptive grounds. No!—the die is cast; I see that he has utterly ceased to possess one solitary sentiment of regard for me. Strange world! One might have thought that, as I had forgotten and forgiven him his cruelties; that, as I had clung to him in his afflictions and in his misery, a sense of gratitude would even have *enhanced* the feelings which I am sure he once entertained for me. But, no! the very course which I, or you, or all mankind, would have been justified in deeming most likely to fortify his affection, has yet evidently destroyed it. It is a heavy blow; but, long have I been a chastened probationer of wo. Happily too, I have within me, the seeds of religion; which, praise be to God, is a staff that increases its support in proportion as the weary and broken-hearted pilgrim relies upon it. Of this gracious hope, I have never lost sight, thanks to a dear father, who early and indelibly instilled into me its precious principles; and, through all my life, though I may have suffered some worldly ties and interests, to twine themselves too closely around my heart, I yet trust that I have never wholly ceased to be an unworthy, perhaps, but yet, a patient, candidate of heaven. In this moment of affliction you know not the blessed consolation which this humble consciousness affords me!"

I could distinctly hear that my sister was weeping; and both their sorrows pained me keenly; but, in that moment, again, the sense of my own sufferings, instead of softening my heart to theirs, steeled it against them.

"Pray, dearest, dearest girl," cried Œnone in tremulous tones; evidently moved by my sister's grief, into those physical expressions of it, which her own, had been unable to excite: "pray, dearest girl," she added; and then again her voice was convulsed, and silenced by emotion. But, in another moment, she resumed clearly and steadily,

"Do not let me, I beseech you, have to bear with me in absence, the thought that I am occasioning you, distress. Indeed, I shall not be so unhappy as you seem to apprehend. Though there is now no Leucate in existence, from which I can make a plunge, and at once be cured of a fruitless passion; yet, believe me, I can sustain any vexation I may experience, with far better fortitude than you imagine. Pray, then, listen to me; I shall be indebted to you all my life for the kindness you have now and ever shown me; I shall be eternally interested in your welfare, ever regard you with the fondest affection: were thousands of miles to intervene, I should still feel united to you by the sympathetic tie of heart to heart. Will you then, can you then, voluntarily continue to torture one who entertains for you a friendship so little usual? will you repay her, for such an attachment as even you, ingratiating and affectionate as you are, will never again excite in any breast, by a fruitless indulgence of unfounded grief, that pains her far more than her words can express."

"No! no!" passionately exclaimed my sobbing sister. Then, having changed my position, I saw the two afflicted friends throw themselves into each other's

arms, and, while urging their mutual exhortations to patience and composure, intermingle their tears; which, at last, completely vanquishing all opposition, flowed in quick and unrestrained succession from the glittering eyes of both. In spite of all my callosity, I could not sustain this spectacle; and fled, in sorrow and in bitterness, to the solitude of my own chamber.

To neither of them did I subsequently make any allusion to this conversation. But, the knowledge of it had prepared me for the communication, which, in the course of a day or two, I received from my sister, of our cousin's intended and approaching departure. She added that she acquainted me with it, in consequence of Œnone's wish; who also requested that I would oblige her by not speaking to her on the subject, and by not attempting to persuade her to prolong her stay.

In the course of the following week, one morning, Œnone stood before me. She was arrayed for a journey; and I saw that she had come to bid me farewell. But, no trace of discomposure was manifest on her fair face; no tear stood in her eye, or hesitation appeared in her manner. She was perfectly calm, and resigned and sedate; though her aspect, upon a closer examination, was grave and melancholy. Yet, had not this, or any other external indication of the real state of her mind existed, Œnone I knew far too well, not to be secure that her serenity arose neither in resentment, nor in a want of sensibility, but in the mastery of principle over the impulses of feeling. In that moment, my heart was softened by this new proof of

the goodness and sweetness of her unequalled disposition.

"Œnone," I cried, "*dear* Œnone!—farewell! I know the motive in which you stand before me, and again I say farewell, perhaps, for ever. May the Almighty protect and bless you! and, wherever you go, may you never forget that you bear with you, the regard, the esteem, and the admiration of an unhappy being; who, while perpetually desiring to do that which is right, is never deviating from the path of wrong. Even in this moment, while I am acknowledging your virtues, and entertaining for you almost such feelings as you deserve, yet, I am sensible that in the very ensuing minute, the darkness and perversity of my nature may come upon me, with a strength against which I cannot contend. Why I was created thus defectively, God only can reveal."

"Do not blame yourself," said Œnone, "you have done me no wrong; indeed, you have been to me"—

"No, no! Œnone," I exclaimed hastily, preventing the conclusion of her sentence, "in your breast is the fountain of charity which faileth not; yet, do not *sting* me by praise. You know, in your inmost heart, but too well that I have *not* been to you what I ought to have been; and, in speaking thus, I use far too lenient terms of reprobation. No—no! I feel that, like the demoniac of the gospel, my 'last state is even worse than the first.' I am now bowed to the earth by bodily infirmities, which have superinduced fretfulness and bitterness of temper to those deeper and graver faults which belong more properly to my unhappy na-

ture. For what purpose, I am permitted to remain on earth, a higher power can alone determine!"

"I pity you," she said fervently, while the large tears that attested the truth of her profession stole insensibly from her overcharged and glistening eyes; "I pity you, with my whole soul; and if you would suffer me, would alleviate your misery."

"Pity me, I know you do, dearest Œnone," I replied; "could all the dark secrets of my sufferings be revealed, even the most ruthless might regard me with commiseration. But it lies not, alas, in the power of mortal either to comprehend or to alleviate them. I am blighted; useless, worthless, sapless, rootless! My life is a curse to me; not a moment of it is passed but in strife and self-disgust. In the morning, I sigh for the evening, and in the evening, I pine for the morning; yet, though I loathe, detest, abhor *this* existence, I sustain perpetual, unutterable fear of *that*, to which Death is the usher. I feel as one doomed; irrevocably, eternally deserted: I feel as though the malediction of heaven, and the indelible mark of hell were upon me; that by the one, I am abandoned, and by the other appropriated. Indeed, indeed, I *am* to be pitied; and if the endurance of utter, incomparable, immortal wretchedness be deemed any equivalent for the perpetration of foul guilt, I am to be forgiven. Yet, reckless, prostrated as I am beneath the crushing weight of my hopeless misery, believe me, there is no additional suffering which I could not cheerfully undergo, to recover sufficient self-control to be able to prove to you the friend and protector, I desire to

be. But it is no longer, alas, in my power, to continue consistently kind to those that abide with me; to those that come daily, hourly in contact with the passing irritations and frenzies, that are partly occasioned by the infirmities of my body, and partly, I fear, by those of my nature. For *your* sake, therefore, dear Œnone, if not for my own, east and west, must be our relative course during the remainder of our lives. As soon, however, as we shall be separated, I feel that I shall be able to value you even more than, if I cannot succeed in loving you as passionately as, I ever did. But seek not, I beseech you, to unite your virtues to my vices; your bright and glorious fate to the dark, and deadly doom of a desperate, and despairing sinner! Yet I was not always that which I am. What then, should be the meed of him who reduced me to this state of irretrievable perdition!"—

And as this habitual thought rushed upon me, again, as ever, I instantly yielded to its maddening effects; the hot blood poured into my throbbing temples, and even the feeble remnants of my muscles swelled into rigidity, beneath the influence of my malignant wrath.

Œnone, who had hitherto been regarding me with looks of tender commiseration and interest, now assumed an expression of anxiety.

"Your exposition of your feelings," she said, "and your but too evident want of all self-control, both ineffably grieve, and alarm me. I will not deny to you that you have rendered me painfully apprehensive of your future career; an apprehension, alas, which the recollection of the past, only serves to confirm. With

such feelings, such an awful pitiable disorder of the mind, as you describe yourself to possess, what may hereafter befall you, God alone can determine! If, therefore, at any future period, any rash act of self-indulgence, should lead you into difficulty or distress; if sentiments of penitence, and despondency should ever take possession of you and your proud, and restless spirit become subdued, *then*, I beseech you apply to me for succour, and for solace: and feeble as I am, you may yet learn, that a woman's strong affection can supply her with the power of affording you both. Forget not my words, I adjure you; during our absence it will always be a consolation to me to think that you remember, and feel kindly to me for having uttered them. For the sentiments of regard and friendship, which you have expressed for me, I thank you with my whole soul; and believe me, with an equal degree of sympathy, I regret the sufferings which you but too manifestly endure. And now, farewell; it is a melancholy, but precious, mitigation of the pangs of separation, to know that we part in amity: and the recollection of your candid declaration of the nature of your feelings towards me, will always prove, I trust, an additional source of alleviation. And now, again, a fond, a *last* farewell!"

We embraced tenderly; and as I kissed her pale forehead, the tears then burst impetuously from her eyes. The sight of this profound sorrow in one so little accustomed to be governed by her feelings, almost unmanned even me, for a moment; and I turned aside to conceal my emotions. When I recovered from

their influence, she was gone, having availed herself of my transient discomposure to effect her departure from the chamber. I ran to the window, and saw her fondly embracing my sister. She then stepped into the carriage which was to convey her to the port. I never beheld her more.

Fluctuating, and unstable as were generally all the better sentiments of my disposition, I yet continued during several days, to mourn the absence of Œnone; and almost to regret that I had ever allowed our separation to occur. But when I looked upon my emaciated form, recollected my infirmities of both mind and body, and again became sensible of my inability of experiencing happiness; that I was little more than a corse endowed with a merely mechanical power of motion, I felt convinced that I had adopted the course which was ultimately both least likely to increase my misery, and to diminish her peace.

And thus, finally terminated my intercourse with my cousin; and almost as strangely as it had commenced. Fate seemed to have decreed that all our relations should ever have possessed some feature of singularity. My love for her began, before I saw her; and, instead of being disappointed, my affections were only augmented, by the sight of her. During a subsequent period, my peace was irrevocably destroyed, because, I could not obtain her: and now, when every extrinsic obstacle was removed, and she was willing to devote herself to me, she again became the unwilling source of my unhappiness, because, *I could not love her.*

While the incidents I have just narrated, were oc-

curring, my gardens rapidly approached completion. They were interspersed with fountains; one of which was formed by a splendid ancient statue of Venus Anadyomene, evidently copied from Apelles' celebrated picture. She was seated gracefully in her shell. supported by two Tritons, and from her hair, which hung, divided, and extended by her own fair hands, in heavy masses on either side her shoulders, the crystal water flowed in copious streams. Mingled with the orange trees that bore "fruit of gold and buds of snow," and other southern plants and shrubs, and in striking contrast to their various and beautiful colours, were obelisks, and pillars, statues, and groups of the purest marble. One of the most conspicuous of all the ornaments of the place was a gigantic figure of of the "suffering" Hercules; by which epithet is distinguished, that splendid statue which represents him while he is enduring the agony occasioned by the treacherous gift of Dejanira. A more magnificent conception, and perfect execution, never issued from the mind and hand of man; possessing too, the additional interest of being evidently the original, from which Guido has copied his celebrated, and beautiful picture of Christ crowned with thorns.

This theme reminds me of a circumstance which I have always hitherto omitted to relate; and which possesses no importance, but insomuch as it tended to strengthen my supposition of the existence of my father. Previously to our departure from our home, in our own land, I had felt a strong inclination to convey with me, some of its many treasures of art; and, in

obedience to this impulse, made such preparations for the removal of them, that, at any subsequent time, they could have been sent to me in safety. But scarcely had this intention been completed, when I received a letter from my metropolitan correspondent; stating laconically that, if I withdrew the minutest portion of the property of my patrimonial estate, he was empowered to stop immediately all farther payment of our income.

This letter, under other circumstances, might have violently exasperated me; but, I received it while I was engaged in superintending the arrangements for our departure, and while my mind was filled with the hope of deriving both mental and corporeal benefit from our contemplated voyage. The slight impression therefore, that it made, speedily passed away; and I now only recur to it, in order that I may make known one of my principal reasons for still believing in the existence of my father.

Time progressed; the occupations which I had imposed upon myself gradually drew to a conclusion: and, at length I walked in a garden, which might literally be compared to the notions we form of that of Eden. Now, then, the voluptuous cravings of my youthful imagination were even redundantly fulfilled: at this period, I was in the possession of every luxury that man can desire: I dwelt in a heavenly climate, and I was surrounded by all those combinations of art and nature which at once transcendently minister to the enjoyment of both the senses, and the mind. Nothing was omitted that could contribute to the gratifi-

cation of any faculty of our being; the ear, the eye, the scent, the intellect, all were equally consulted, both in the selection and arrangement of every material of this really fascinating, I may almost say, matchless scene. Perhaps there was not a wish which the perusal of the most gorgeous Eastern tale could have suggested to the effeminate, and to the fastidious, but here was realized. Supreme, uncontrolled, I walked, a monarch, in this fairy land; and wherever I turned, I encountered all that most should please: every earthly thing was mine, save,—*the ability of deriving pleasure from aught.*

Yes; this, was still my wretched, and consciously irremediable, state. After the slight excitement occasioned by the departure of Œnone had entirely subsided, I gradually sank into an increased, and darker discontent. Two years had I now passed in this glorious region; and five, altogether, had consequently elapsed since I had seen my father; and yet, at this period, the utterance of his name, or even an allusion to him, was capable of instantly exciting in me the feelings of a demoniac. Like those bodies in chemistry, which, from a state of comparative innoxiousness, are converted into poisonous, and destructive matter by being united, so I, when brought into contact even with the *thought* of my father, was aroused from the torpor of sickness, and suddenly transformed into a fierce, and wrathful maniac.

Perhaps, at this period, the enervation of my mind had attained its deepest, completest state. I had destroyed the picture of the infernal Medusa, but, I

attempted vainly to even weaken the impression which it had made upon my brain; there, it was indelibly depicted with all the truth and strength of the accursed original. The form of the fiend himself too, was now eternally before my eyes; and his words were for ever ringing in my ears: I sought laboriously, but I found not, the power to forget that he had doomed me to be a *Parricide;* and all the incidents of the night of horror on which this denunciation was addressed to me, were never absent from my memory.

Often, I strove to persuade myself that the apparition of the demon was an illusion; and that I had been the victim of my delirious imagination. But, vain was my attempt; and, at this period, the influence of my superstitious fancies was so potent, that my fear of darkness, and craving for light, possessed a strength, and a violence, resembling the characteristics of some species of insanity. These idle apprehensions, and my still more futile efforts to protect myself from them, were perhaps, powerfully, but insensibly promoted and encouraged by my consciousness of the deep guilt of the ardent thirst of deadly and unnatural vengeance which, in defiance of all my terrors, I never ceased to cherish. The consequence was, that, at this period, I was not only enervated, not only was my mind utterly unstrung by my bodily infirmity, but I was conscience smitten; tortured and intimidated by my inevitable sense of the iniquity of my intentions. Nevertheless, in the encouragement of them I persisted; not one bad sentiment was changed; not one iota was abated from the contemplated measure of that san-

guinary retribution which I resolutely awaited but the hour, and opportunity of inflicting upon him, who had occasioned my irretrievable ruin. Yet, all the time I nourished these guilty thoughts, such was the consequent extent of my agonizing, though consciously visionary fears, that, day and night, I never ceased to entertain almost equally, that deep, but futile horror of darkness, and obscurity, which I have already mentioned. Throughout our whole house, with the exception of the rooms exclusively appropriated to my sister, from one end of the year to the other, alike in the temperate warmth of the winter, and in the fierce, and burning heat of the summer, not a blind, nor a shade, nor a lattice, existed, to intercept, or even mitigate, the fiery rays of the sun; and as soon as it had departed, every chamber, and corridor, which I ever entered, or traversed, became one vivid blaze of artificial light.

These painful feelings, at once the phantasy and scourge of a diseased mind, might possibly have endured much longer even than they did, had they not been terminated by an incident; which, at first, seemed likely to have afforded me some slight alleviation of my unhappiness. Eventually, however, it proved but to have modified it; to have changed its bent for awhile, not to have diminished its strength.

Such was my corporeal debility, at this period, my power of walking was so limited, that I scarcely ever attempted to exert it; and the consequence was, that, riding being the best of all the exercises of gestation, I was frequently on horseback; wandering in the

vicinity of our abode, in the delusive hope of equally benefiting both my body, and mind. One day, during a deep reverie, having unconsciously extended my ride much farther than I had intended, I suddenly became so exhausted that I was compelled to descend from my horse, and repose upon the earth, beneath the shade of some overhanging vines. On this spot, I had rested but a few minutes, when I observed with alarm, that the horse had strayed to a considerable distance from me, in seeming search of herbage. I instantly rose, and ill, and fatigued, as I was, attempted to overtake him. I had approached within a few paces, when the animal perceiving my intention, cantered off far beyond my reach. Again I advanced; and again, I had arrived almost within a grasp of him, when he repeated his mischievous evasion. Yet, a third time, I made my attempt, and was similarly defeated.

Then, my blended anger, apprehension, and exhaustion united to produce such a pitch of agitation that my whole frame was shaken; and all the horrible sensations which I have previously described, seized on me, in their fullest strength. I felt as though the hand of death were upon me, violently striving to force asunder the still tenacious union between the body and the principle of life: and I sank to the earth, utterly, perfectly enervated, and overwhelmed, even more by the tumult of my mind, than by corporeal fatigue.

After this transport had somewhat subsided, my precarious situation became the absorbing subject of my anxious reflections. I had evidently ridden to a

considerable distance from my home, and was in a part of the country with which I was unacquainted: consequently, unless I could obtain succour, I might pass the remainder of the day, and the coming night, on the very spot which I then occupied; and possibly, ultimately, perish upon it.

But yet, this very succour I apprehended; for, I scarcely dreaded death more, even though of the painful nature of that, which I might now be doomed to encounter, than the exposition of my infirmities to any earthly eye, save that of my sister. At this moment, mine indeed, was a most painful condition for a weak-minded man, as morbidly sensitive, as perversely proud. I was prostrate on the earth in a state of almost infantine imbecility; and the heavy sweat of exhaustion and agitation stood in large drops upon my brow. My brain too, was so darkened, and oppressed by the sympathetic influence of my corporeal debility and disorder, that I was conscious that it did not even retain sufficient vigour, and intelligence to arrange the words necessary to express my thought. If any one therefore, should approach me, I should be compelled to reply to them almost as incoherently, and inconsequently, as though I were stolid, or insane. So acutely did I feel the supposed ignominy of this situation, that, occasionally I fervently hoped I might perish rather than be discovered.

But, I was reserved for a far worse end than even this might have proved. My destiny was not to be accomplished, nor the just vengeance of Providence to be appeased, by my enduring an ignoble starvation in

a vineyard. I had lain in this painful condition perhaps, some hours; when, I suddenly observed within the distance of a few yards of me, that peculiar object of my apprehension, in my present state, a female, traversing a path, which I had not hitherto observed among the vines. For a moment, I almost hoped that I should not excite her observation, But, my doubts were speedily decided; for, even in the instant in which I conceived them, her eye fell upon me. She advanced in my direction; and I observed that she was a peasent very meanly clad, in fact, a perfect type of poverty, but young, and apparently comely

When she had arrived sufficiently near, she accosted me in the language of the country, yet, with the accent of a foreigner.

"I am afraid, Sir," she said in a very pleasing, and remarkable voice, "that you are ill."

With all the tortures which the degrading weakness, vanity, and sensitiveness that I have described, could supply, I had been apprehending this interview; and seeking how I should best contrive to conceal my infirmities. But, the moment the peasant spoke, all these fears and thoughts were instantly dispersed by the familiarity of tones, which suggested a thousand bygone recollections. I gazed scrutinizingly into her face; and, in another second, all my doubts were terminated. It was Ianthe; Ianthe, grown from the state of childhood, into that of puberty; considerably altered, seemingly care-worn, and disfigured too, by the marks of toil, and poverty; but still, with sufficient resemblance to the bright-eyed, fair-haired girl of the

garden of flowers, to render me incapable of not immediately detecting the identity of the two.

While I entertained these thoughts, I observed her silently and intently. At last, she suddenly aroused me from my retrospection, by repeating her question; and instantly my mind returned from its consideration of those happy days, to the painful sense of my present situation. It was evident that she did not recollect me; indeed, after Œnone having failed to recognise me, I never entertained an apprehension of any other person's success. Consequently, after a moment's consideration, and impelled by the heavy physical distress I was enduring, I surmounted my feelings of reluctance; and replied,

"I am very ill; and shall be thankful to you, if you can supply me with any assistance."

Her eyes were still beautiful; and they sparkled with sympathy, and commiseration as I returned this answer. But, her feelings of pity were infinitely increased, when, in a violent effort to raise myself, my overwrought strength suddenly deserted me; and I fell heavily backwards on the earth.

With alarm, and strong interest in her expressive face, she instantly approached to assist me; and, though fragile in appearance, having in reality much of the vigour of the peasant, she easily succeeded in placing me upon my feet. She then told me that her abode was within a hundred yards of the spot on which we stood; and that if I could summon force to reach it, I could there remain until her father, who was a vintager, should return from his daily work, when he

would procure for me the means of conveying me wherever I might desire. I adopted, thankfully, her proposal; and, leaning upon her arm, immediately commenced my walk.

To my surprise, I then found that the place whereon I had rested, was but a short distance from the high road; and that we must proceed along a portion of it, in order to reach her residence. This discovery, though it eased me of all apprehension as to the mode of my return, instantaneously excited in me a new and more sorry and unworthy apprehension, even than any of those I had yet entertained. But, to explain it, I must now with shame relate that, as though my own vices and follies had not been already redundant, I had imbibed from the luxurious inhabitants of the neighbouring seaport, a despicable love for the gaieties of apparel, as well as for all the frivolities of ostentatious magnificence. Consequently, my skeleton form being at the moment to which I am now recurring, bedecked with a degree of gairishness that was as inappropriate as unseemly; and my mind being in a state of degradation that was quite worthy of my exterior, I trembled lest some disdainful noble, or haughty merchant, should pass and discern, in this close and ignominious association with a poverty-stricken peasant, the still more haughty and wealthy foreigner, who had proudly stood aloof, and invariably discountenanced all their offers of fellowship. Literally writhing beneath my apprehension, and the idea of the insulting, contumelious gaze of some scornful patrician, I made even preternatural efforts to arrive at the spot which ex-

empted me from this liability: mentally resolving that no love of solitude, or any other temptation, should ever again induce me to ride even in the immediate vicinity of our abode, without a meet retinue.

I record these contemptible thoughts and feelings, simply to show the depth of degradation to which my own crimes, and a father's wrathful injustice, had reduced me. *Once*, my faults were those which arise in turbulent and strong passions, the rank luxuriance of a too fertile soil; but *now*, they were the feeble, sickly, noisome weeds which grow stealthily and scantily in the interstices of a stony and devastated plain. Oh, *how* I loathed these little, mean, debasing weaknesses, no words can ever express! though I never ceased to strive to palliate their existence by representing to myself, that they originated in no natural bent of mine; but were the congenial and poisonous growth of the fell destruction which my ruthless father had inflicted on my former being.

Independently, however, of the motives which I have assigned, there were others almost equally powerful, to render me heartily desirous to arrive at the place of my destination; for, I plainly saw that during my walk to it, the painful efforts and exertions, I was compelled to make, and the evident distress and exhaustion of my whole frame, obtained for me the pity of Ianthe; and I hated, loathed, detested pity! From man, woman, or child, from old or young, powerful or weak, pity scarcely ever emanates but blended in a greater or less degree, with an alloy of patronage and protection. The pity of Œnone, and of my sister,

was pure, genuine, unadulterated affection: but, the pity of a stranger is generally little more than condescension; a sort of hybridous feeling composed of a small share of instinctive aversion from the aspect of calamity, and a very large proportion of inward exultation and congratulation arising in the soothing consciousness of being free from those defects or misfortunes which may be its object. Entertaining this opinion, it may consequently easily be credited, that I cordially abhorred that nauseous, counterfeit composition, courteously and vulgarly, denominated, *Pity:* and most heartily rejoiced, when my arrival at her abode, and the attainment of the means of rest, partially freed me from that of Ianthe; though, I own, I believe that hers was as honest, unalloyed commiseration, as one stranger could feel for the misfortunes of another.

But what shall I call that abode?—A cottage? No. A hovel? Yes; and such a hovel as only those who are acquainted with the kingdoms of the south, and of the limited necessity which the peasant of those happy lands experiences of protecting himself from the climate, can even imagine. There were four walls and a roof, it is true; and insomuch, it did not differ from the common residences of the inhabitants of less favoured climes. But in these particulars alone, existed any resemblance; in all other respects, it was utterly dissimilar.

Perhaps, when every evil has been minutely compared, all its worst features of aggravation scrupulously weighed, and even its faintest shades of mitigation

carefully considered, it will be universally acknowledged that there is *none* which can vie with that of poverty,—utter, entire, abject destitution. Its progress of brutalization possesses an unparalleled rapidity; the constant, gnawing apprehension of being unable to secure on the morrow, the necessary sustenance of life, at once reduces a man from the level of the state whereto competence exalts him, to that of the savage animal. Every other wo, without exception, has some alleviation: for every other wo partakes in a greater or less degree of sentiment; and is, therefore, never wholly devoid of dignity, which the sufferer, though often perhaps unconsciously, cherishes and employs as a means of self-support. The mourner, the deserted, the oppressed, the deceived, the calumniated; the husband who is dishonoured, the wife who is abandoned, the mother who is cursed by an unnatural son—all suffer only in the spirit. They *know*, too, in their inmost hearts, that the duration of their unhappiness is solely dependent upon their own exertions; they feel too, that they need not perish, *unless they please;* and, in this secret sense of power, lurks a consolation which gilds even the death to which their cherished woes *may* ultimately lead them. But in poverty, exists no particle of mitigating delusion. It partakes of naught that may extenuate, embellish, or even deceive; it is a hard, stern, naked, horrible, and debasing reality which at once attacks the very primary source of resistance, the most deeply seated energies of both body and mind; and that ultimately withers, consumes, annihilates its alike broken-hearted

and consciously degraded, victim. Wretch as I am, I feel that though the wealth of the entire globe could not diminish my misery, it might be augmented by my subjection to this most iron and unbending of human calamities.

In spite of my exhaustion, and the disorder of my spirit, I yet could find sufficient disinterestedness, to be much distressed by the view I had taken of the abode of Ianthe. I greatly desired too, to be informed in what cause this strange vicissitude of fortune could have originated; for, as I have stated, at the time of my acquaintance with her father, he was in the possession of a most respectable competence. But I knew not how to satisfy this inquisitiveness, without revealing to her, our previous intercourse. However, after I had partially recovered from my fatigue, by the aid of some artifice, and more circumlocution, I at last arrived at the desired point; Ianthe being still almost as ingenuous and communicative, as in the days of her childhood. I thus learned circumstances which much grieved me; not the least of which was, that I was the cause, though the innocent one, of their present horrible penury.

It appeared that her father was my father's land-steward; and that solely in consequence of his hospitable reception of myself, Œnone, and my sister, he had deprived him of his situation, which was a very lucrative one. The imprudent man, though he had long been in possession of this more than competent income, had saved no portion of it; and was, therefore, rendered destitute by his dismission. In vain

he applied to my father, humbled himself before him, repeated to him that he was unaware that in receiving his children he was perpetrating an offence; and made every effort to induce him to revoke his decree. But my father was inflexible: indeed, when was he ever known to turn from his wolfish track, when cruelty was the object of his pursuit?

This was the cause of the sudden disappearance of Ianthe and her family, which had before excited my surprise. Reluctant to expose his poverty in his native land, and preferring to encounter it in some climate less stern than his own, her parent had emigrated to this beautiful region; where, he had hitherto, scantily and laboriously supported himself and his daughter, by pursuing the occupation of a vintager. Isabel, her pretty sister, was dead; destroyed probably by the unaccustomed hardships which she had been compelled to encounter.

There was in this simple story, much that interested me; or, at least, to speak more correctly, that excited in me as much sympathy, as a consummate egotist can ever entertain for the woes of a stranger. I regarded Ianthe with attention: in spite of the ravages which toil and privation had made upon her beauty, it still retained considerable delicacy; her hands were small and perfectly formed; her waist was slim, and her figure graceful. Her mind, too, was evidently still not unfeminized; poor, wretchedly, pitiably, poor, as was every thing around her, yet its extreme cleanliness and order, clearly denoted that its superintendent had hitherto contracted none of the coarser

habits of her present station: and her whole appearance, air, and manner, more eloquently corroborating this silent evidence, conjoined to prove that she still might be an object of interest to the most refined, and the most fastidious.

After I had been conversing with her for some time, and the extreme misery of my sensations had considerably abated, I perceived my horse straying in a field; and deliberately cropping the scanty pasturage it afforded, within the distance of a few score of yards of the hut. I had already been so humiliated before her, that I felt I could sink no deeper in her estimation: I knew that she was fully in possession of the secret of my infirmities, and that I had no farther discovery to apprehend. I therefore told her how I had been deserted by the treacherous beast; and that, as my debility prevented me from making the attempt, I hoped she would endeavour to recover him.

In her eager desire to execute this wish, the good-natured girl instantly darted from the hovel. I watched her with interest; stealthily and slowly, when, in his immediate vicinity, she advanced still nearer to the unconscious brute; at last, making a sudden and active spring, she seized him by the bridle. The animal started, and plunged slightly; but though sprightly, and mischievous, he was not vicious. Patiently and submissively, therefore, he yielded himself a prisoner to his artful captor, who conducted him exultingly to the spot before the hovel, whither I had advanced in my impatience to meet her.

I felt ashamed to offer money to one whom I had once known under such different circumstances; con-

sequently, having mounted the now passive animal, I thanked her warmly for the assistance she had afforded, and the kindness she had shown me; and telling her that we should meet again, departed.

When I reached my home, I acquainted my sister with the adventure that had befallen me; and with the whole particulars of Ianthe's sympathy, appearance, and penury. I then added that, being loath to discover myself to either her or her parent, I wished that she would visit them as though accidentally; and, without any mention of me, promise to relieve them. In the mean time, I would consult with our tenant, and endeavour to find for the father some situation which would afford him an adequate income for the rest of his life.

To this project of concealment, I was instigated by two reasons: the first, and certainly, by far, the principal, arose in my general antipathy to society, and love of seclusion, both of which feelings I foresaw must be opposed were I to make myself known to them: for, I could not adopt this course without virtually subjecting myself to the necessity of occasionally inviting them to become the inmates of our abode. The second reason existed in my unwillingness to allow either father, or daughter, to identify the decrepit, wretched invalid of their present acquaintance, with the comely, vigorous being, whom they had once known in all the health and pride of youth.

After this arrangement with my sister, I immediately proceeded to fulfil my share of it, by seeing our land-steward and notifying to him, my wishes. The

result of this interview was, that the father of Ianthe was appointed to a respectable employment in the city, which produced, conjoined to a considerable sum that I allowed him out of my own funds, a very sufficient income. My sister, who, as I had desired her, had previously seen him several times, affecting that she had discovered him accidentally, now communicated to him, this unexpected good fortune; which he and his daughter naturally imagined to have occurred in consequence of Marion's pretended intercession with the individual who nominally bestowed the situation.

From this time, flattering myself that I had done my duty by them, I thought no more of either Ianthe or her father. My sister, I knew, frequently visited them, and that they were ceaseless in their professions of gratitude to her; and also, that she sometimes experienced considerable difficulty in baffling their inquiries about her brother. These were the particular reports concerning them, which I occasionally heard; if one can be said to *hear* that, which produces no more lasting impression upon the memory than that, which a small boat leaves upon a stormy ocean; for, again my mind had relapsed into its state of tumult, and again I was utterly immersed in the consideration of my own wretchedness.

Several months elapsed; and my gloom was unrelieved by one ray of light. I had utterly abandoned myself to the dominion of my misery; and it had consequently attained a power which rendered the curse of existence intolerable. In spite of my apprehensions of the future, often had I contemplated suicide with-

out affright; and there were moments of despondence and of agony, so irresistible, that I firmly believe, nothing could have prevented me from adopting this desperate remedy, but that strong thirst and hope of vengeance which never forsook me.

One day, when my morbid feelings of dark melancholy, and sullenness, were most strongly upon me, I was straying in our gardens, when I heard the sound of voices: and unconsciously, and mechanically I walked in the direction whence they appeared to ascend. Arriving at the termination of an avenue formed of orange trees, and acacias, I discovered the speakers, seated in a vineyard, without the wall which bounded our grounds; and on an elevation that commanded a beautiful view of the blue waters of the Mediterranean. It was a lovely spot; and most appropriate to the evident feelings and occupations of those who had selected it. On the left, extended the ruins of a vast aqueduct, a magnificent, and almost imperishable monument of the Roman power; and which, standing above the level of the horizon, contrasted strikingly, and picturesquely, with the deep azure of the spotless empyrean. On the other side, was a valley, the very type of fertility, filled with the ilex, the olive, the date, and the vine; the latter of which hung in graceful festoons, its juiciness, and verdure still undiminished by the summer heats. Beyond this beautiful object, was a line of hills, at the foot of which lay the city, its proud towers, and domes, and spires, glancing and glittering in the rays which a southern sun poured upon them, in a flood that seemed almost palpable.

Such was the blaze of light, that buildings, ocean, river, foliage, nay, the very earth itself, all appeared to have imbibed it, and spontaneously to return an irradiated front to the great luminary. With this glorious, soothing, and yet exhilarating scene, all animated nature seemed to be in unison, and in jubilee. The vintager was singing in the distance, the national, and characteristic songs of his country; the contadina was bustling in the vineyard with a motion, and an air, that unequivocally indicated the lightsomeness of her heart, and occasionally too, her voice was also tunefully raised in expression of her happiness: the cicala was gaily and merrily chirping; the aziola was cooing; and far, and near, man, bird, and beast, all united to express their sense of peace, and gladness.

The two occupants of the spot from which, this beautiful spectacle was commanded, were a youth and a maiden; and their air, and apparel sufficiently expressed their rank. This opinion which their appearance suggested, was confirmed by my observation of a group of mounted attendants, stationed at some distance from them, and holding a couple of horses; but, from whose inquisitive and menial inspection, they were concealed by the intervention of still higher ground than even that, on which they were seated. The youth was remarkably handsome; he was dressed in the Spanish costume which displayed to great advantage, the symmetry of his agile, but masculine form; and the splendid plume of feathers in his picturesque hat, as it waved to and fro, impelled by his animated action, imparted an additional grace to his whole ap-

pearance. But, the maiden was exquisitely beautiful: and the gorgeousness, peculiarity, and somewhat oriental character of her apparel, even enhanced her natural charms. She wore a rich simar of Florentine satin, inlaid with golden flowers of the rarest workmanship, which, around the bosom was confined by a row of emeralds; but, probably, in consequence of the heat, being partially unbuttoned, it exhibited a dazzling, and perfectly lovely neck. Her outer robe, which was somewhat of the character of a mantle, though it wanted the hood, was formed of green velvet of the most brilliant hue; and the seams of it were curiously traced and adorned, by rows of the most costly pearls. Her simar descending but little lower than her knees, displayed her ample, and brilliantly white trousers of the rarest lace, figured with golden sprays, and leaves, executed with infinite artifice. On her head, she only wore the black veil of the country; which, entirely removed from her face, hung down her back in ample folds that contrasted strikingly, and picturesquely with the radiant green of her robe. I imagined her to be a wealthy Greek from one of the Eastern isles; and her companion a Sicilian.

Such was the pair that met my fascinated gaze. Time, place, circumstance, the extreme beauty of the maiden, and the striking singularity of her gorgeous costume, all combined to render this spectacle eminently remarkable. But, it was the occupation of the principal actors, which perfected the impressiveness of the picture in my eyes; and made every feature of a scene, that presented so vivid and painful a contrast

to my own state, and condition, root itself indelibly in my mind. And so completely has it survived the confusing and effacing power of my subsequent sufferings, that, even while I am now writing, all the minutest particulars which relate to it, are as fresh in my recollection as though I had witnessed them but yesterday.

At the moment of my observation, the youth was addressing the maiden with great energy, and animation. Though I perfectly understood their language, yet being a foreigner, and as the speaker was at some little distance from me his rapid and impassioned utterance prevented me from distinguishing his words. Nevertheless, it required no aid from the sense of hearing, to enable the dullest and most superficial spectator to discover the nature and topic of their conversation. Never before, had I seen love so strongly, and so beautifully, enthroned upon the features of any existing being as it now appeared upon those of this fond, and comely pair; never even had I *thought* that the human countenance was susceptible of an expression at once so tender and so passionate, so joyous and so affectionate, so radiant, and yet so eloquently, intensely feeling! As the youth gazed closely, poringly, into the maiden's face, his dark eyes flashing with soul and fire, they literally seemed to crave, to search for, and to drink, the very source of life from hers. His mistress did not blench beneath this ardent scrutiny; her look was more tempered, but it was not less concentrated than his: it was less bold, but it was not less expressive; it contained more of day-light, more of glorious feminine purity, but it did not less une-

quivocally reveal the tale of mortal love that was passing within. No, the red spot of passion glowed as vividly upon the centre of *her* cheek; the brightness of respondent, and equal feeling was as apparent in *her* deep blue eye. I could see the quick palpitation of her bosom; soul answered to soul; and the exuberant joy of her exulting heart played so beamingly upon her illumined countenance, that it almost seemed to encircle it, even as a palpable vestment of radiance!

After remaining in this situation, for a brief time, they at last arose; and, the youth's arm twined caressingly around her waist, they thus, slowly descended to the valley. With the most intent interest, I watched them; gradually their forms grew more indistinct; and at length, they entirely disappeared. Then, I threw myself upon the earth, in an agony of bitterness; for, during the whole period that I had been contemplating this enviable pair, I had been contrasting their fate with mine. And the strong, and intense sense of my own sufferings, and deprivations, which the consideration of their happiness occasioned, had filled my soul with gloom, wrath and regret.

"Oh, great, stern, ruler of Heaven!" I cried, "what have I ever done to merit the accursed doom of being thus utterly stripped of the possession of that godlike faculty, which has just raised these beings almost to the level of divinities!—Why have I been robbed of the power of experiencing that best blessing, which this imperfect existence affords? Why has *Love*, that bright, that glorious, sun of the heart, ceased to shed its vivifick beams on mine?—It shines on all, save me;

and *I* writhe beneath its absence; wither in the want of it. Yet, when I raise my craving eyes in anxious search of its genial light, I only discern the image of impending death hovering with outstretched wings, lingeringly, menacingly, over my devoted head; and am made but to feel, with an augmented despair, that the remainder of my wretched lot is irrevocably cast in the fell darkness of his vast shadow. *This*, is my accursed, and eternal, doom! Yet, are my faults not mine; they originate in the neglect, and callosity of a father. But, *he* escapes and *I* am punished; he lives, perhaps, in happiness, and I writhe in misery! Is this, the justice of Providence? In the pride of my youth, in the morn of my days, I am a tree without a core, a cypress without a root; and *he*, my destroyer, in the decline of his years, may be reveling at this moment, in the plenitude of strength, and in the possession of every faculty. Yet, as though my meed were insufficient, I not only want the *power* but I am cursed with the insatiate *thirst* of happiness. What is there I would not relinquish, what not cheerfully undergo, to possess again the capability of exciting in a lovely woman, the feelings I have just witnessed! But, who will ever again look upon me, with the eyes of love? And yet, I would sacrifice my soul to be able to inspire it!"

At this moment, the thought of Œnone flashed upon my recollection.

"True," I said, "she loves me; were I to encourage her, perhaps, *her* face would soon smile upon me, as beamingly as that of the maiden, I have just ad-

mired. But, alas, the French noble's creed is true; 'we cannot love a second time, her whom we have once entirely ceased to love.' Were the faculty of love to be restored to me, even in the redundance in which I once possessed it, I should never, I fear, be able to devote any portion of it, to Œnone. But, would to God, that I could make the trial—oh, would that I could regain this blessed, this divine power! There is no tyranny I would not cheerfully undergo, no degradation, no subjection, could I but once more entertain the affection of love for any existing being, and inspire her, with a respondent feeling for me!"

While I was still pertinaciously increasing my torments by the indulgence of these, and similar thoughts, I heard approaching footsteps; when, instantly arising from the ground, I seated myself on the base of an adjoining statue. In the next moment, my sister stood before me; appareled in her riding dress.

"I have just come," she said, "from visiting Ianthe. She really is a bewitching girl, and I have conceived quite a passion for her. I cannot understand what could have induced you to have so mis-represented her personal appearance to me. Why, my dear, blind brother, she is perfectly beautiful; I am not quite sure that I shall except even Œnone, when I say that I do not think I ever saw a fairer creature. And her intellectual qualities thoroughly correspond with those of her exterior; in fine, a girl with a more elegant mind, or form, I never beheld. When I gaze upon her father, I confess that I am astounded by the strange freaks which Nature sometimes plays. How

he ever chanced to have such a daughter, I protest, I am utterly incapable of explaining; and how *she* ever chanced to preserve so much delicacy, and refinement, through such a career of privation and misfortune, as she must have endured, is, I acknowledge, equally enigmatical to me."

It might almost astonish the most profoundly skilled in human frailty, to observe how greatly men are influenced in their estimation of the beauty of a woman whom they may feel a lurking tendency to admire, by the opinions and criticisms of others. Rochefoucauld, the ingenious writer, whom I have already more than once cited, acutely says, "*Il y a des gens qui n'auraient jamais eté amoureux s'ils n'avaient jamais entendu parler de l'amour.*" Perhaps, both feelings arise in the same principle; but, neither of them can occur, save in servile, imitative dispositions, wherein no original bent, or feature exists. Such a mind was mine, become: the natural passions I had once possessed had been slowly, but surely, and utterly, effaced from the tablet of my breast, in the fierce, and resistless current of the moral and physical convulsions which I had sustained; and, alike irretrievably spoiled, and indurated, in this bitter process of erasure, it was doomed to remain, during the rest of my days, a blank, for the hand of chance, or of my own fruitless desires, to trace upon its stony surface, a few transient, and desultory characters; which the first fresh accident, or fresh caprice, should again remove, and replace, by some new, and equally false, and fleeting substitute.

These remarks will at once indicate the train of reflection which my sister's encomium suggested.

"Can Ianthe," I thought, "be so comely, as Marion describes her to be? If really so, why should I not love *her?*—She always was an object of interest to me; when, even quite a child, I thought her one of the sweetest, and most bewitching, and fairy-like beings I had ever beheld. Doubtlessly too, the improvement in her circumstances, has equally beneficially influenced her appearance. *Wherefore*, should I not love her! Were I to adopt this course, what a mitigation, what a blessing, I should entail upon my existence!"

"Why do you not," said my sister, pursuing her chain of thought which had not been interrupted; for, these reflections of mine had occurred during her speech: "Why do you not visit Ianthe, and judge for yourself of the accuracy of my report? I am sure that her society would be to you a source of alleviation, if not of pleasure. Thither, too you may go, without fear of discovery, if you still wish to continue unknown to her; and I can assure you too, that she is desirous to meet again the sick stranger."

I made no reply to this injunction; but, silently promising myself that I would speedily obey it, strolled from my sister's presence to another quarter of the garden. As soon however, as I had become completely free from her observation, I mounted my horse, and turned in the direction of Ianthe's new abode; which was at a distance of not more than three, or four miles from ours.

While I traversed this short space my mind was actively occupied by numerous thoughts of a nature which had long been utterly strange to it. I was considering the image of Ianthe; attempting to depict to myself all the different improvements which her change of fortune must have produced upon her appearance; conjecturing the nature of the reception she would give me; in fine, was busily engaged in strenuously endeavouring to persuade myself that I was already, deeply, passionately in love.

While I thus reflected, I arrived at the door of their new abode; and, as I gazed upon it, I could not but derive a pleasure from the consciousness that I was the cause of this great change in their condition. Their present habitation was situated without the walls of the city, in its immediate suburbs; and, independently of the beauty of its situation, was intrinsically commodious, and indicative of the competence, if not, wealth of its possessor. It was not large; but, every portion of it was well built, and well arranged: and, though architectural appearance and ornament were not neglected, still eminently expressive of solidity, and comfort.

As I paused before the gate of the garden to make this observation, I discerned Ianthe walking within it. Her eye almost immediately caught mine; and, summoning the attendance of a servant, she advanced to the entrance. She evidently recollected me; and, judging by the expression of her countenance, seemed to rejoice to meet me again. But, her words speedily even more than confirmed her looks: she welcomed

me warmly, and eagerly inquired the state of my health; then, desiring the domestic to take charge of my horse, requested me to enter. Gladly, I complied; and in the ensuing moment, I was traversing her grounds, with, this time, *her* arm resting upon *mine*.

As I regarded her, I could not forbear from frequently saying inwardly, with much secret self-complacency and exultation, "This good work is my deed." And certainly, the change effected in her exterior was equally remarkable, and satisfactory. Instead of the wretched peasant whom I had previously beheld, poverty inscribed as legibly upon her hollow cheek, and emaciated features, as upon the tatters which scantily covered her, there now stood before me, an elegant creature; whose natural attractions were enhanced to the utmost, by all those artificial and most material accessaries which a well arranged costume can supply. As I furtively gazed again, I admitted that my sister's judgment was quite right: she *was* a beautiful girl: with an antelope-like grace of walk, and motion, and eyes pellucidly bright, and irresistibly eloquent.

She seemed to derive great pleasure from descanting to me on the change that had occurred in her condition, since our previous encounter; telling me truly, and ingenuously, the entire cause of it. Then, I was doomed to experience repeatedly the pleasure of hearing my sister's praise and mine proclaimed in the sweetest tones in the world; and with all the fervent gratitude of an utterly unsophisticated disposition. This detail she frequently interrupted by renewed in-

quiries after the state of my health; told me regretfully that I did not appear to have increased in strength; and, withdrawing her arm from the support of mine, insisted that I should sustain mine upon hers. In all this, and similar conduct, which, in a less unpractised, and unworldly person would only have plainly proved the extent of her coquetry, being solely instigated by the natural kindness of her disposition.

During our walk, she asked me many other questions respecting myself, my occupations, my residence, and my station. Without too, any discourtesy, but in the pure simplicity of her mind, and with an ineffable grace of manner that imparted an irresistible fascination to the eccentricity of her course, she pursued these inquiries so pertinaciously, that I was compelled to fabricate a long tissue of fiction, to avoid the avowal of my real name and condition. At length, we reached the house; her father was there; and, under the feigned designation which I had adopted, she presented me to him.

There was something indescribable about him which I never liked, and which made an unfavourable, and indelible impression upon me, even when he was most hospitable to me. As I anticipated, he did not recollect me; and gazed curiously at my maimed arm; then eyed me generally with an air that was altogether disagreeable to me; but soon, his manner entirely changed.

There is one strange quality in our nature, which, to me, has ever been inscrutable. I allude to that mysterious sympathy which frequently so powerfully

influences two men, during a first interview, that, though they shall never before have met, each never even have previously heard the name of the other; consequently, been incapable of forming any of those favourable or unfavourable prepossessions which a prior acquaintance with a man's reputed character, is almost certain to engender in the breast of one who is personally a stranger to him; though, too, there shall be no discrepancy in their relative worldly position, yet, almost in the very moment, they become confronted, the influence of this mysterious action shall commence; and before either shall have had an opportunity of *verbally* manifesting any supremacy of mental power or endowment, all equality between them shall have ceased to exist. The one, shall have silently assumed a level superior to that of the other; and, in proportion as this one shall have risen, the second shall have respondently sunk. Yet this consciousness of strife, of conquest, and defeat shall be entirely confined to the sensations of the combatants. No word, or even look of patronage on one side, or of concession on the other, shall have transpired to indicate their existence to any common observer; for, I do not mean to assert that it is entirely concealed from him, who has eyes, and chooses fully to employ them.

This is the occult link in our nature which has always baffled my attempts to penetrate its source. Why should man, free man, unoppressed, unsubdued by the sense of guilt, yet quail before the regard of his fellow man? What is there of real, intrinsic dignity in the one, to inspire the other, with an imaginary idea

of comparative insignificance? Neither does concession in this strange strife always indicate the consciousness of mental inferiority; for I have often seen the fool predominate. However, it may be said, that one of the two antagonists possesses nerve, and the other does not. But, I answer; that the one who is victorious in this bloodless contest, shall perhaps, run away in the moment of personal peril; while he, who blenched beneath the mysterious influence of an imaginary supremacy, shall firmly confront the real danger, and perish rather than flee before it.

These remarks have been suggested to me by the nature of my own meeting with Ianthe's father. Perhaps, however, there *were* reasons for *his* tacit submission to my tacit exertion of pretensions to superiority. He was a weak man; and I do not think that he possessed any principles which were particularly admirable. Yet, I mean not that he was either a consummate knave, or a consummate fool; probably he was too much of both, to be wholly either. It may be said that I am almost describing my own condition; for that I too, was both weak and bad; and consequently, why should he have succumbed to me? True, but my weaknesses were more stormy than his; I was the tempest, and he was the breeze; and in the rise of the one, the other naturally merges.

I remained for a considerable time discoursing with Ianthe; and when I departed, was so well satisfied with my visit, that on the following day, I returned to repeat it. And thenceforward, day after day, week after week, this was my occupation.

Ianthe was evidently pleased with my homage; I soon learned that it was the first of its kind, which she had ever received; and it was gracious and impressive in its novelty. As my attentions developed themselves, and their object became more obvious, her manifestation of satisfaction was less; but I did not think that her entertainment of it, proportionately decreased. On the contrary, I imagined that this change in her exterior was a favourable indication; for it implied to me that her predilections had so augmented in strength, that at last she had become awakened to the necessity of concealing them. She knew but little relating to my personal circumstances; I had always indirectly represented them to her as being very straitened; and, from the, perhaps, premeditated, observations which had fallen from her father, since his acquisition of his present station and income, she felt convinced that he would never give his concurrence to her union with a poor man.

With this individual, therefore, I had a part to play, the difficulty of which afforded a fresh stimulus and charm, to the pursuit I had undertaken. While I was zealously engaged in endeavouring to propitiate Ianthe, I had to fulfil the far more arduous and almost Herculean task of attempting to persuade him, that I was regardless of her; and that *he* was the sole object of my attraction to his abode.

What, however, were the means I possessed of obtaining the affections of the daughter? Maimed, mutilated, irretrievably impaired in personal aspect and in bodily health and vigour, how could I ever hope to

make any impression upon the heart of such a girl as Ianthe? In these very deficiencies existed, I believe, one of my principal engines of advancement. Women generally like the society of the invalid. In their nature there is something which makes them rejoice in that taming of the wild, and the unmanageable, which illness occasions; in that reduction of the strength of the more formidable animal, to the level of their own weakness. It gives them dominion; it exalts them from the state of nominal supremacy, and real subjection, to that of the dominator. Instead of being, as heretofore, patronised and tolerated, or at least, only conventionally, and fitfully worshipped, it at once invests them, not with delegated, not with conditional, but with actual, intrinsic, permanent power. Instead of being any longer slaves by coercion, or mistresses by permission, they become rulers *per se*, protectresses, and patronesses. It affords them, also an opportunity of evincing their compassion; of indulging too, in a thousand little innocent and endearing kindnesses; and of temporarily leaping that rigid fence of formal propriety, which, otherwise, habitually fetters the female intercourse with man.

Probably, in the influence of some one, or perhaps, all these feelings, originated Ianthe's partiality to my society. Perpetually endeavouring to advance myself in her estimation, I never manifested any of the acerbity of disease; and every temptation to the indulgence of moroseness, I obtained in this predominant desire, the strength to repress. None, therefore, of my acquired, or natural faults appeared; in her pre-

sence, I was all patience, resignation, submission, yet eternally animated by the wish to please her.

This conduct, I saw gradually made a deep impression upon a frank and amiable girl, but constitutionally ambitious of sway. Consistently, therefore, I continued to pursue it, in spite of the physical sufferings, which often manifested themselves but too plainly before her. Yet I was not pained by her discovery of them; when we first met, she had made herself mistress of the whole secret of my infirmities; and I had not therefore, to apprehend that her detection of them might militate against my attainment of her affections. I was conscious that she knew them all; and if she should ever love me, I should triumph in despite of her knowledge. Consequently, in her society, I had always the satisfaction of feeling that I was utterly exempt from the liability of enduring a species of torment, whereto I was exposed in my intercourse with every other existing being, except my sister.

As our intimacy increased, it gradually led to the entire manifestation of her character. She was a high-spirited girl, and endowed with many amiable qualities; but a child of nature, uncultivated, impetuous, ardent, proud. In early life, her education had been wholly neglected by her father; and she, therefore, wanted those fixed principles which were the rock and solace of Œnone. No temptation could have induced her to have erred wilfully; but her resolutions were transitory and uncertain. Yet she was full of sweetness and affection; and eminently abounded in all the virtues which properly appertain to the dispositions

that possess her, or similar faults. Her disinterestedness too, was unlimited; and she was generous, ardent, and benevolent; eager to serve, and energetic in her service. In fine, she had many qualities to excite genuine and permanent love.

But did she excite *mine?* No: for a time, however, I tried most strenuously to persuade myself that she had. I felt deeply the inestimable value of the prize in the game I was playing; and I was resolved not to miss it for want of an adequate effort. I was conscious that if I could once again arouse in myself a truly unselfish passion; once again twine around my heart a perpetual, and all-absorbing interest in the existence of another, that I should be emancipated from the thraldom of that great incubus of my being, the disease of my mind; and then have but to contend with the mere secondary, vulgar evil of physical derangement. This was an end worth a struggle; and a strenuous one I made.

Nevertheless, my efforts were futile; and in spite of my attempt to self-deceive, I soon became secretly sensible of their futility. Yet I did not abandon my pursuit; for many other motives now conjoined to instigate me. Perhaps, the strong hope of alleviating my mental torture was the origin of my undertaking; but it was often subsequently sustained by very different, and even less justifiable incentives. During, however, their occurrence, I was not disposed to subject them to a very severe analysis. I felt an excitement, an impulse; sensations which to me were heavenly, in comparison with the death-like apathy, the

horrid monotony, the hateful weariness and disgust of existence, which I had so long been enduring. My mind, during many years, had been but a vast void; or rather, a tablet which presented but one unvarying inscription, *Hatred and revenge;* too eager, and too glad was it therefore, to welcome its new guests, to be very rigid in either the examination of their character, or the motives of their presence.

The truth is, that after a time, my vanity was my sole incentive: but, it is a very easy process of self-delusion, to mistake a cherished disease of the head, for an affection of the heart. I can now however, see clearly the entire current and nature of my sensations. I had already devoted a considerable period to this pursuit; Ianthe had hitherto only manifested some slight degree of predilection for me; and my vanity consequently, became deeply involved in my desire of success. I began to feel that this frivolous, but powerful passion, was staked against her subjugation; that I was bound to prove to myself that, despite all the disadvantages of mind and person, I was still possessed of the power of inspiring affection. To these incentives, the habit of communion with Ianthe, united to render the cessation of my pursuit utterly impracticable. The consequence was, that never did true lover, actuated by the worthiest, and sincerest impulses, evince greater zeal, employ greater diligence, undergo greater exertions, in attempting to win the heart of the object of his genuine worship, than did I, in obedience to the dictates of these false feelings; this morbid, selfish, cold-blooded desire of establishing for

myself a passionate interest in the breast of an innocent, and unsuspicious girl, whose peace might probably be eternally ruined by my success.

It must not, however, be supposed that I entertained any premeditated intention to occasion her unhappiness. Very opposite were my feelings, and wishes. I really was fond of her; I really, I believe, loved her as much as I had the power of loving: what was the extent of that power, the subsequent incidents will shortly show. How indeed, could I be otherwise than attached to a person who was all kindness to me? who hourly proved that she derived pleasure from my society; who, on the slightest manifestation of my infirmities was ever ready to succour, and never wearied in her attempts to console me. Who, when I experienced a moment's exemption from the depression of disease, would charm me with her sprightliness, and when my malady returned, would instantly subside into gentleness, and sympathy: who, in fine, made ceaseless, and equal efforts both to mitigate the melancholy of my mind, and secure me every personal comfort. She seemed to regard me, in some respects, almost as a kind of rare, fragile, pet animal; for whose protection, and to preserve whose existence, it was necessary to exert a perpetual vigilance. Often, therefore, as, with my arm resting upon hers, we strayed through her beautiful grounds; whether she were cheerful, or sedate, whether her converse were animated, or grave; whether she was eagerly discussing some topic of strong personal interest, or buoyantly uttering a thousand agreeable and imaginative sallies, she

would yet never forget to turn occasionally, and look poringly into my face, to ascertain the exact state of my strength. In those moments, her beautiful countenance assumed a strange, and ineffable expression; almost, as though she were at once entertaining for me, that impossible union of the sentiments of mistress, mother, wife, and nurse.

From this description of her conduct, it might be inferred that she was the lover, and I, the maiden; that she made all the advances, and I passively, and condescendingly received them. But, I am now adverting to a period when our intimacy had been long established; and besides, in repayment for all this zeal, and partiality, I returned her one very important equivalent. I had become to her a perpetual, and necessary stimulus to the exertion of her faculties, and abilities; and she was consequently gratefully pleased with and fond of me, for affording her the opportunity of being thoroughly pleased with and fond of herself: a sensation, the unbounded satisfaction of which is generally both the secret source, and support of the existence of most friendships, and many passions; and furnishes the reason why we scarcely ever discover in either the one state, or the other, a perfect equality. One party must bend, the other, stand erect; one must be the vine, the other, the prop; one must find a pleasure in the entertainment of admiration, the other in being the object of it.

I was content to play the subordinate to Ianthe: I was content to encourage, and to foster all her flights of superiority; to be with her, the patient listener, the

approving auditor. I was neither humiliated by the patronage of her kindness, nor by that assumption of the protectress, which arose in her affection, and in an ingenuous belief of my necessity of her support. But, I would not allow myself to sink too low; for, I knew that no woman could ever experience a passion for him, for whom she entertained no respect. Therefore, whenever I saw, or thought I saw, that her idea of my dependence was growing too prevailing, I made every effort of mind, and body, which I thought most proper to controvert it. As soon as I conceived this end to have been attained, I relapsed into the docile, and the submissive, but yet, the zealous, the ardent, and endearing: my sole object being to secure, at any self-sacrifice, the possession of her affections.

In this species of intercourse elapsed many months. Occasionally perhaps, a sense of the injustice of my conduct would obtrude itself into my mind; but, I always baffled its reproaches and admonitions.

For a long time, her father had, to my surprise, ceased to manifest any symptoms of suspecting the object with which I sought his daughter; though I was now, more frequently than ever, at his house; indeed, scarcely ever apart from her society. But, the unseen storm was impending; and the catastrophe was silently approaching. One day, one memorable day, that I visited her, the melancholy expression of her countenance instantly struck me; and, upon observing her more closely, I discovered the traces of tears.

"Ianthe," I said eagerly, "what distresses you?"

She regarded me sadly; but, made no reply. I re-

peated my question with even greater anxiety; and she then, rejoined,

"My father has commanded me never again to see you."

My passion fired at this announcement; but, in the next instant, I felt a thrill of pleasure.

"And you regret," I exclaimed tenderly, yet exultingly, "this unjust and imperious mandate?"

"I did not say so," she answered.

"No," I retorted, somewhat disappointed by the brevity of her reply, and of her manner; "no, you did not *say* so, but your aspect, and the traces of tears upon your cheek, gave me reason to suppose and to hope that you had received this command with, at least, reluctance."

"Well," she replied after a moment's pause, "I know not why I should attempt to conceal from you, my sorrow. I *do* grieve that we must part."

"Part?" I cried, "you do not mean that you purpose to submit to this barbarous decree?"

"And what have you ever seen in me of evil," she reproachfully rejoined, "to make you think me capable of acting in open hostility to a parent's solemn, and peremptory decision?"

This reply, I confess, surprised me; and I added quickly,

"You will not surely sacrifice *me*, for the sake of complying with this tyranny, simply because it emanates from a father? Remember, a parent may err as frequently and as gravely as other men. I could,

if I pleased, reveal to you, a proof of the truth of my assertion."

"Speak not so unkindly to me," she replied; "I have enough of sorrow to endure without the additional weight of your anger. How, am I to act? I have a father who has ever been to me, the kindest of monitors, the best of friends; he has commanded me to separate from you and never again"——

"And his reasons?" I cried, interrupting her, "what are his reasons? Does he impugn my character?"

"My sense of duty," she rejoined, "would not have permitted me to have demanded them; but, he spontaneously avowed them to me. He said that neither his own pecuniary means, nor yours, would ever admit the possibility of our union. You see therefore, that he is only actuated by paternal feelings; and I will not repay him with a child's ingratitude. No; we must part and for ever. He has placed invariably unbounded confidence in me; and I believe that the slightest breach of it, would break his heart."

My anger was aroused; almost as much perhaps, by her praise of her father, as by her persistence in her obedience to his injunction.

"You have shown me," I said, "that you are equally ignorant of yourself, of those who surround you, and of me. Your breach of duty break your father's heart? Foolish girl! I could direct your attention to a heart that I believe to be the perfection of egotism; that solely occupied during a long series

of years, in the pursuit of its own gratifications, has at last become so exquisitely hard, that it might serve as an anvil for the hammer of the Giant of the Northern Mythology. Yet, this, is the delicate material, the gossamer thread, which you suppose would break, were you to perpetrate the slightest dereliction. Self-deluded being that you are! Some day perhaps, you may learn to discern the difference between active benevolence and virtue, and those negative qualities which protect a man alike from the commission of either great good, or great evil. You are familiar with sacred lore: do you remember the message that John bears from heaven to the church of Laodicea? 'I know thy works; thou art neither cold nor hot: *I would that thou wert cold, or hot.*' And so, would I; I would rather that a man possessed vice and its corresponding virtue, than be without both virtue, and vice. These, are harsh truths; but, I seek to show you that, though I could admire in a daughter the obedience and self-sacrifice which arise in a principle of duty, I can see no merit in *infatuation.*—And now, fare you well—and for ever. May you not live to regret that you have discarded, and contemned one who would have faithfully loved you! May you never live to be another's betrayed, and neglected wife!"

And as I thus spoke, I was proceeding towards the door: I regarded her attentively; she seemed oppressed with sorrow; but, she made no effort to prevent my departure. I laid my hand on the latch.

"Stay, stay!" cried a voice, "here is a wild business; why surely you must be both insane?" And as

he uttered these words, her father entered hastily from the adjoining apartment.

Ianthe started; the little colour that remained in it, forsook her cheek; and even I did not feel altogether unapprehensive.

"What a singular pair!" he said, "there is no calculating upon your movements. One anticipates a certain result, and the exact contrary ensues. Why are you going to separate? Do you not both love each other? At least, I am sure, I can answer for my daughter. Speak, Ianthe, am I not proclaiming the truth!"

I thought my ears deceived me; and so, evidently did Ianthe; for, she remained silently, and wistfully gazing upon him, with a look of mingled doubt, amazement and apprehension. He repeated his question in a more exalted tone.

"Pardon me, father," she replied, "I am so bewildered that I can scarcely muster sufficient reason to give a coherent answer. Do you really mean that I have your permission to express the genuine feelings of my heart?"

"Certainly, I do, silly girl," he replied quickly, "I was but in jest, solely in jest, when I told you, that I desired your separation."

"*Then*," she said eagerly; and, suddenly pausing, all the blood that had forsaken her fair cheek returned to it, until it became a glowing crimson. She added not a word; but, she cast upon me a look that could not be misunderstood.

Hitherto, I had remained silent, and amazed au-

ditor of this scarcely comprehensible conversation; patiently awaiting and prepared for, any turn which the current of events might take. But, when I heard Ianthe's emphatic and eager commencement of her reply, and the abrupt pause which ensued; and observed her flushed cheek, and passionate, and eloquent expression, a sudden thrill of rapture, and of triumph darted through my veins.

"It *is* quite true," said her father to me confirmatorily, in reply to the gaze of sudden hesitation which I had fixed upon him; and while he spoke, his daughter's looks corroborated his assertion.

"What! Ianthe," I cried in ecstasy, "do you really, truly love me? And will you be to me a wife? And can you indeed, look with love, on such a maimed, mutilated, accursed wretch as I?"

"*I can;*" she said in a low, but clear and decided tone: and her father placed her hand in mine. Its warm touch thrilled to my soul. I grasped it—pressed it—and raising it to my lips, kissed it fervently. *That* moment, was one of exquisite, enviable, unalloyed rapture, and exultation. But the *next*—

My object was secured, the termination of the acclivitous path I had been so long ascending was gained. I *had* emulated the youthful Sicilian, I *had* obtained the affections of a beautiful woman; and my first impulse was naturally one of intense satisfaction, and triumph. But, in the ensuing instant, a torturing sense of the past, the present, and the future, suddenly and painfully, arose within me. I awoke electrically to the

knowledge of my true condition; of the ban I was enduring; and of the doom that was inevitable. The possession of my suspended faculties was suddenly restored to me; and I felt acutely the impossibility of ever availing myself of the victory I had so toilsomely achieved. The light that had lured me seemed bright, and cheerful, and strong, from the distant darkness: but, when I seized it, it expired in my grasp, and I was stranded on the rocks. The moment of reckoning had arrived; my eyes were opened, and I saw that while I had been obstinately hoping I was obeying the dictates of my *heart*, I had only been the wretched slave of the phantasms of a morbid, and frivolously active mind. Then too, with an ineffable agony of contrition and dismay, I became conscious that body and spirit were equally and eternally broken; and that the one, was not more incapable of ever again experiencing the impulses, than, the other, of sustaining the burden of affection; that both, in fine, were alike unfitted for the entertainment, and for the offices of love. And, in that poignant moment of unequalled retribution, I again shudderingly acknowledged, that,—I was an enervated, prostrated wretch; the *semblance* of passion had feverishly agitated my imagination, but its *soul* lay utterly dead within me; its fires were eternally extinguished; and, in lieu of a heart, I possessed ashes.

These, were the thoughts that arrayed themselves before me, thrillingly, and startlingly, as the spirits of the entombed may have appeared to their conscience-

stricken murderers. The cup of my bitterness was too full; it overflowed: and, for a single instant, I experienced a slight alleviation.

These reflections, the description of which has required so considerable a space, occupied but a few moments in their occurrence. In my hand still rested that of Ianthe, though during my poignant introspection, my grasp had gradually and insensibly become so relaxed, it seemed to retain its situation, less by my exertion, than by her own. Her father spoke; and the first tones of his voice instantly restored to me my self-possession.

"Do you think, my lord," he said, "that I have not known you, ever since you commenced your wooing incursion into my territories? You may have thought yourself very crafty, but you see, you have had to deal with an older fox. Why, I discerned your intentions and objects from the very beginning of your visits hither. But, I would not declare my approval of them, because I cunningly thought that the necessity of disguise, and the encounter of supposed opposition, would only serve to strengthen your affection. And have I not proved to be right? Ha, ha, ha! my lord, you must have deemed me a blind, stupid, neglectful old parent; but, what did I, the very second day, that you honoured us with a visit? Why I said to myself, 'Here is a broken down outlaw'—begging your lordship's pardon, for strange to say, I did not recollect you—'come into my forest, to poach my venison. Judging by his own tale, he seems to have a very imperfect, and perplexed knowledge of

himself, and his circumstances; so, as I am a charitable man, I will see if I cannot aid him in disentangling his own story; and, if he be deficient in other goods and chattels, endow him with the possession of a little self-knowledge.' Accordingly, as soon as you had mounted your horse, I mounted mine, and followed you, until you arrived at your house. When I saw you enter the abode of our benefactress, I was astonished; but, when I asked a servant, who was the person who had just entered, I was far more astonished by his answer. Yes, Ianthe," he added in reply to the surprised, and inquiring gaze of his daughter, "in your nameless, equivocal lover, you see our noble benefactor, the brother of your gracious friend. I need not now, I imagine, repeat that I only pretended to oppose you from the motives I have mentioned. But when, after a time, I saw that the passion had taken root, and yet continued to lag upon the road, I thought that a little additional contrariety might perhaps accelerate it; so, I gave Ianthe the command which has led to the present happy result. Never indeed, could I have dreamed of the arrival of this triumphant moment! To see the son of my former master, and lord, standing hand in hand with my daughter, a betrothed bridegroom, and bride, is a spectacle of joy and exultation, that might justify any extravagance. Indeed, to own the truth, I *do* at this moment, feel rather mad; and when the wedding occurs I doubt not that my insanity will be completed. I am without doubt the luckiest, gayest, most contented varlet in existence; though certainly," he add-

ed mutteringly, "I did not expect that my stratagem would have proved the occasion of my overhearing so flattering a picture of myself."

During this incomparably vulgar tirade, which I record literally, in order that my sensations may be fully conceived, I was a martyr to my passions. The sense of shame, indignation and humiliation which the knowledge of having been thus duped, biassed, swayed, and regulated, by an ignoble clown, was so strong, that, for a moment, it almost superseded all my other feelings. There was indeed no common bitterness to a morbidly proud mind, in the idea that, while I had been thinking I was pursuing my own selfish purposes for my own selfish ends, I had literally only been a puppet in the hands of this clumsy, low-minded plebeian fabricator of vulgar artifice; and that, according to his pleasure, he had checked or advanced my paces, regulated my movements, and prompted and turned me, as a mountebank exhibits his muzzled beast. It was a memorable, and a bitter, but a useful lesson to me; which impressed upon me indelibly, the consciousness that he who walks in the path of deceit, may chance to fall into another's gin; that he, who is the most artful captor, while too intently bent on catching, may yet himself be irretrievably caught.

Perhaps, this diversion of my sensations enabled me to recover with greater speed from that paralysis of my faculties, which the sudden dispersion of my delirium had occasioned, I regained my self-possession; and instantly determined upon the course which I should pursue. I pressed the gentle hand that I still

retained, fondly, and fervently, and then relinquished it. Addressing the father, I told him that, during the course of the morrow, his daughter should receive from me a written exposition of certain circumstances and feelings, her knowledge of which was essential both to her, and to me. Then, regarding him haughtily, I left the room. But, on the face of Ianthe, I could not look.

I reached my home, and was considering the means of extricating myself from my present difficulty, with the least possible degree of pain and mortification to the luckless object of my delusive attachment, when, I was intercepted by my sister, who had received a letter from Œnone. It recited various particulars regarding her voyage, its extreme length, and other circumstances which had prevented her from writing sooner; it revealed some of her present feelings; described,—what even in that moment of bitterness and difficulty, afforded me satisfaction,—her peace of mind; and expressed a thousand kind wishes for the welfare of my sister, and myself. But, in the termination, was a solitary line, that instantly threw my whole being into disorder. The few words that produced this overwhelming effect were simply these:—

"I suppose that of course you have heard who is my neighbour; but in case he should not have written to you, I will tell you. *Your father has returned to the mansion.*"

My temples throbbed: my heart beat; I could scarcely sustain myself. But, I soon conquered these corporeal indications of emotion; and my reso-

lution was irrevocably formed. I folded the letter, and returned it to my sister, without any remark.

As soon as I could gain the privacy of my own chamber, I proceeded to fulfil the sole duty that intervened to prevent the immediate execution of the intention I had formed; and thus, I wrote to Ianthe.

"I know not how to explain, or to palliate to you, the weakness, and madness of my conduct; I fear that it is neither explicable, nor veniable. But, if sincere regret and contrition may prove any atonement for the perpetration of a wanton wrong, I may lay some slight claim to your forgiveness. I do, with my whole soul, lament the deceit I have practised upon you; and from the depth of my heart, humbly, prostrately, remorsefully implore your forgiveness.

"How shall I make intelligible to you the nature of the injury I have done you? the cause of the separation that must now eternally exist between us?—Your attractions fascinated my eyes, excited my *brain;* I thought my *heart* was touched, and, I *hoped,* and tried to believe, that I *loved* you. I knew if I could succeed in entertaining this affection, I should be extricated from the abyss of mental misery into which I had fallen. This was the golden apple that hung at the end of the path on which I had entered; and, supported by my many charms of mind which our intercourse developed in you, it lured me on from

day to day. I searched not narrowly into myself; I saw but you, and the reward that success would obtain for me: and I persuaded myself that I *loved.*

"As long as apparent opposition, and a certain degree of doubt, stood in my path, I was not *compelled* to institute a more strict self-examination. I enjoyed your society; I derived consolation from your kindness; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, was my unconscious code; and I continued to mistake the base metal for the pure gold, the semblance for the reality. At length came the ordeal; you were resigned to me by a father. *Then,* my eyes were opened by the awful importance of my situation; and I discerned, with what remorseful bitterness I will not attempt to depict, that I had been the victim of a self-delusion; not only I became sensible that I did not love, but I felt that the power of loving had departed from me, for ever. A fearful responsibleness was therefore suddenly imposed upon me: and, with a poignant sense of self-upbraiding that might almost have expiated any less crime, I found that I was subjected to the necessity of immediately determining whether, by tacitly suffering myself to be united to you, I would entail upon you a life of endless misery and regret; or, whether, by exposing you to a temporary pain, and vexation, I would preserve you for, I devoutly trust, a long career of unalloyed happiness.

"These were my thoughts during our last ill-fated interview; what have been my subsequent resolutions this letter intimates. Forget me, I implore you! and instead of mourning, rejoice! rejoice, that I have had the

courage to adopt the course which I now premeditatedly take. We shall never meet again, in this world. But rejoice! I say. You know not the danger to which you have been exposed; you cannot dream of the desolation which you have escaped. You have been tottering on the brink of a moral precipice; you have been within a hairbreadth of earthly perdition. My life has been a combat. Fate has met me as an adversary armed with sword, and knife, and left upon my outer being some ugly scars; but, the hideousness of the wounds within, surpasses the conception, even the understanding, of the virtuous. Yet, you have fancied that you knew me; but, I tell you, that there exists not the mortal, who is *less* strange to my real nature than you; for the many can but be in ignorance of it, while you have formed and fostered an opinion which is the exact antithesis of the truth. You have deemed me a gentle invalid; a placid entity with human affections disciplined and subdued by bodily affliction; a plaintive melody, not the less interesting and *manageable*, because set an octave lower than the vulgar pitch. Now, mark the contrast. I am a withered husk, a broken shell, a tiger-skin without even a stuffing of straw: I present to the eye the ruined surface of manhood, but the entire core is wanting. I no longer possess one passion, one tie, one link, one sympathy which connects me with humanity. The flame of life, of love, of mortal good and ill has departed from my heart for ever; but, in its place, burn steadily and solitary the fires of hell. This, is its only inmate; every feeling, whether of

blame, or praise, which once existed to unite me to my race has perished, never to revive. Foe, or friend, may attach to me any epithet of reprobation which the animosity of the one, or the stern justice of the other, may conceive my crimes, and character, deserve; they may proclaim me, savage, bestial, wolfish; stigmatize me as a monster, denounce me as a fiend: but they *cannot* call me, that perhaps, worst of all opprobrious distinctions, *Man!*

"Instead, then, of lamenting the course which I have selected, rather consider it, as some faint atonement for the wrongs I have previously done you. As happily might you be united with one of the wandering demons of the East, as with me; *he* could not prey more mortally upon your blood, than *I* should, upon your heart. You would find in me a ceaseless source of disappointment, inquietude, and terror; my life, I repeat, has been one long combat, and in strife it will conclude: even now, I am going upon a mission of deadly retribution; and, were we to wed, in the same hour, I might prove both a bridegroom, and a corse.

"It is not in my power, to measure the extent of your attachment to me; but, I firmly hope, it is not so deeply planted, that it may not be eradicated, without any very violent pang. Such is my trust; my prayers would be, *could I pray*, that our separation should not occasion you even one instant's regret. I cannot think that a being so worthless as I, can have excited in you, any permanent feeling of affection; and, therefore, for the sake of my own consolation, I will continue to

believe that you will forget me as speedily as I desire. Farewell, Ianthe; pity me; and forgive me."

As I never saw her again, nor my sister, nor any one, from whom I could learn the effects produced by this letter, I can only conjecture them. I may, however, as well state here, as I shall have no fitter opportunity of pursuing this theme, that, two years subsequently, I accidentally learned, and with much satisfaction, that Ianthe was married; and perhaps, I will hope, partially, through my means: for, though I was compelled to abandon her, I did not forget to secure to her father, in trust for her, the possession of such a sum as would enable her to follow her own inclinations, in the choice of a partner in that perilous bond, which either makes or mars two human lives.

The evening of the day on which I dismissed my epistle to Ianthe, found me commencing a long journey. The following week, I was again pacing the deck of a vessel; and after a prosperous voyage, arrived safely in my native land.

The ensuing morn, I reached the mansion of my birth: the memorable scene of my direst calamities. I shuddered when I first saw its old black walls, and towers; but I paused not. The draw-bridge was down; and rapidly crossing it, I entered the fatal abode. I chanced to encounter none of the domestics, though numerous indications of habitation met my eye;

and proceeded straight to the apartment, my father was wont most frequently to occupy. In an agony of apprehension, lest the dearest and *only* wish of my heart, should incur disappointment, I softly raised the latch; and, with a ferine exultation, a thrill of ferocious joy, which are ineffable, discovered the ruthless object of my invincible and immortal hate.

I entered the room; and again I was once more in his detested presence. He held a magnificent and glittering stalactite, which he was contemplating so profoundly, that he neither heard nor observed me. I advanced rapidly; and suddenly confronting him, in the same moment, sternly and invectively addressed him.

"Father," I said, "you have rendered me a very, and an eternal wretch, the most miserable, and degraded being that breathes; and I have come to thank you *condignly* for your just and righteous deed."

He did not start, or by any change of aspect, or of hue, evince the least emotion; but, tranquilly raising his head, he regarded me, for an instant, deliberately, and scrutinizingly. Then, resuming the inspection of his fragment of quartz, he replied, in his accustomed tone, and manner of diabolical sarcasm,

"You mistake, my son; I found you the thing you pronounce yourself, ready made to my hands by those, of nature. But, you are still unaltered, I perceive; at least, in spirit, for the external tenement is a little dilapidated; yet, I dare say you can ruffle as bravely as ever."

Long had I known too well, both the species, and

the power, of the provocations to which I should inevitably be exposed in this interview with my inhuman, and opprobrious parent; and I had resolutely endeavoured to prepare myself for the patient endurance of the most elaborate efforts of his fluent rancour. But, the very first instant wherein it was tried, all my fancied self-control deserted me; and, when he presented to me the poisoned chalice of his malignity, again, as ever, I seized, and drank it, with insane avidity, until my whole nature was converted into venom.

Beneath the stinging malice of his savage reply, delivered in those tones of mockery, and insult, which an eternity of existence could not have effaced from my memory, my wrath arose with a suddenness, and a violence, that momentarily impeded my respiration.

"Father," at length, I hoarsely cried, "beware!—I have come hither, to seek atonement, to inflict retribution; not to sustain additional injury."

"Atonement?" he repeated, disdainfully; "for what?—Have you not already received it?—Have I not left you, for years, in peace, and in the possession of a princely revenue? thereby spontaneously crippling many of my own sources of enjoyment, in order to promote yours. Yet, you now ungratefully come, and shamelessly tell me, that I still owe you atonement. Churlish boy! it is *you*, who are *my* debtor."

I drew from beneath my cloak, a human hand.

"You say, truly," I rejoined; "I *am* your debtor: and behold, I present to you, one of my heaviest debts. See you this withered limb? remember you to whose

frame it once belonged? and do you deem, that this deed requires no expiation?"

I advanced the ghastly object to him; he regarded it composedly.

"Well," he replied, "then, I am to understand that this is a gift to me. It is neither the most splendid, nor the most valuable, I imagine, that you might have procured in the orient land wherein I am told you have dwelt. But, I thank you; it is skilfully preserved, and you may place it yourself in the adjoining room, among the other anatomical preparations."

"Cruel, ruthless, unnatural being!" I exclaimed, in a transport of indignation, "will nothing excite you to compunction, or commiseration? Oh, that I had the power of wreaking upon you my vengeance, as I desire! slowly, deliberately, progressively! How long, think you, wolfish, and obdurate, as you are, that your devilry would sustain contumaciously, the infliction of a mortal agony! Would that I could try! would that I could learn, whether remorseless, pitiless to others, you are yet self-regardless—whether you could sneer and scoff beneath such tortures as I could impose upon you! Oh, that I had you, where I could execute my will, I would make you eat your own heart, but I would lower you, from your towering altitude of demoniac pride and scorn, into the craving, cringing, weeping, abject supplicant!"

And as I gazed upon him, my whole soul overflowing with malice, and wrath, the painful conviction of my utter inability of personally contending with him,

could scarcely prevent me from again engaging with him in a mortal strife.

My father regarded me grimly, and loweringly.

"Do not exasperate me," he said; "though not very choleric, you know that I *may* be excited into a flame. But, you are not worthy to effect my discomposure. Tell me, and tell me calmly, why have you sought the lion in his den? With a sorry effeminacy of feeling, which I now heartily repent, I was weak enough to entertain a sort of regret for some of the passages which have occurred between us; and consequently, in the possession of the chief portion of my wealth, you might have lived, and died, unmolested by me. Why then, I repeat, have you come hither to beard, and insult me?"

My wrath was somewhat mitigated by his tone; and I replied more tranquilly,

"Your equivalent, weighty and omnipotent as it may seem to you, is but dross to me. What avails the beauty of the prism, to the blind, or the sweetness of the lute, to the deaf? Enter a rudderless bark in the midst of the vast desert of waters, and offer to the wretched mariner who is perishing beneath his thirst, your lumps of gold: would he thank you? would he not rather raise his dying hand in menace against you? One single drop of pure water were, in that moment, more prized by him, than all the diamonds in Golconda; yet, *once*, perchance, he would have preferred the smallest gem it yields, to all the crystal lakes, the universe contains. This, is *my* condition. There *was* a time, when, your sanction to my union with my

cousin, and the tithe of that, which you have recently bestowed upon me, might have procured me unalloyed happiness. But now, I am like the mariner; your gold, your jewels, all the pomp, and circumstance, which riches can obtain, are to me, but even as the dross: they have arrived too late. You had previously been to me, that which the Prophet entitles the Roman army, 'the abomination of desolation;' you had ravaged, devastated my heart, you had laid waste its fair fruits, you had converted it into a charnel-house. And now, therefore, I too, am writhing, perishing beneath my thirst; my mouth is parched; my tongue is fevered; my heart burns: but, *unlike* the mariner, *my* agony can only be slaked by *blood.* Now you know the object of my presence."

Suddenly I produced a pair of pistols, the handles whereof I turned towards him.

"Choose one of these," I said, "for I have lived to learn that spacious as is this globe, it is not large enough to hold us both: one of us twain must perish to preserve the existence of the other. The purest breeze that bears the fragrance of the South, were, for me, but poison, while I retained the consciousness that you survived to contaminate even the minutest portion of the vast atmosphere. One therefore, I repeat, of us twain, must perish: choose then, your weapon."

During this speech, my father's slight discomposure had entirely disappeared; and he replied to my injunction, with his wonted air and tone of irony;

"Choose one of those weapons? Impossible! my son. Should I be mad enough to consent to your pro-

posal, I should be eternally ruined; for, every estimable man on earth, would shun me, were it ever discovered that I had once so derogated from my good name and station, as to deign to fight so notorious, ruffling a caitiff as you."

At these words, every portion of my being again yielded to and trembled beneath the pernicious influence of the fiery passions, which, the fierce, and inhuman author of my existence ever possessed the dangerous power of exciting by his malignant sarcasms, in the furnace of my breast.

"Father, father," I cried, "these gibes will drive me into madness. I have a dark and desperate soul, and again I bid you, beware!"

"Son, son," he rejoined, "a man can but speak according to his natural gifts; and perchance, I should be as much justified in complaining of your violence, as you are, in storming at my apathy, which *I* denominate serenity. But, you are an ungrateful knave, and I never see you, that I do not admire the wisdom of those Thracians, who mourned when a child was born, and rejoiced when it died."

"I came not here," I sternly replied, "to bandy words with you, to incur fresh contumely, or to suffer myself to be the butt of your ignoble raillery. I stand before you, a broken, desperate, and evil man; and you, my parent, have been the wilful, and the wanton author of my ruin. And do you think that you shall escape repayment for your deed? Fool!—hither, have I journeyed to demand atonement, and to inflict retribution; and man, nor devil, shall baffle the fulfilment

of my soul's desire! Choose then, your weapon; or, by the heaven that is above me, if you are coward enough to refuse, I will butcher you on the spot whereon you stand; with as little thought of mercy, as little sense of remorse, as though I were one of the rabblement in the shambles, smiting an ox!"

"Coward? fool?" repeated my father, "I thank you; as well as for your proposition of despatching me, in a manner so compassionate to *me*, and so satisfactory to *yourself*. I do not doubt your affection, and that you would alacriously fulfil your threat, if—I would permit you. But, I promise you that my concurrence you will never have; and without it, you may as well raise your puny arm against a mountain rock, or, in the Persian fashion, lash the ocean. Sorry knave! learn that I contemn you, far more than I hate you—learn that I laugh at your impotent, ignoble wrath! But, even the wasp may sting the lion, and a thorn may torment the side of a giant: such to me has often been the effect of your uninjurious, but vexatious malice. I know not therefore, why I should not comply with your most characteristic, and filial proposal. I shall at once confer a boon upon a grateful son, and rid myself of a fretful insect, which has obstinately buzzed in my ear, until the sound has become detestable. It is written that a man may cut off even his own right hand, if it offend him; hitherto, I have only partially availed myself of this permission, by practising upon your *left*. But now"——

"Impious perverter!" I exclaimed, vehemently interrupting him, again excited, by this inhuman sneer

of triumphant malice, into a sudden paroxysm of wrath; "blasphemer! evil as you are, dare not to distort the scripture into a justification of your atrocities! Yet, say your worst—wherefore should I heed you? 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'"

"How little do we know ourselves!" cried my father emphatically; "with what daring, with what stupendous effrontery, do we censure in others, the very faults which we ourselves most eminently possess! There *is* a word which possesses a respondent sound to '*evil*,' that I could name, which might perchance apply to you, when *you* are quoting the scripture, even far more fitly than your epithet to me.—It might raise the ire of a saint to see the blindness of the world!—But come; I will no longer oppose your desire: let me examine the weapons, for, to confess the truth, I have no reason to place any very great reliance upon your Punic notions of either equity, or honour."

I was too éager to attain my object, to resent this imputation; and I therefore, tacitly placed the pistols in his hands. He searched them minutely; and then, having made his choice, returned the other to me.

"Now," he said, "we will descend to the court; and there, we will see whether we cannot satisfy our mutual antipathy."

He made me precede him; and thus, we arrived at the yard at the back of the mansion, which was entirely protected from observation; except from the windows of the apartments, which belonged exclu-

sively to him, and which were consequently, secure from all menial intrusion.

We then deliberately arranged the forms of our combat. Our agreement was, that we should advance from one stipulated point, to another, and fire from any portion of the interval between the two. According to this compact, we were at first, nearly thirty paces asunder, but we might approach as near as ten. If the bullets of both should fail in their sanguinary mission, we were to re-load, and renew the fight; but we were equally sensible that such an event was little likely to occur. All this preliminary proceeding, was settled as tranquilly, and formally, as though neither possessed a consciousness of the execrable nature of his intentions.

We took our ground; and two stern, bad men were, then, grimly confronted! In that moment, I felt exultingly, that I had attained a portion of my object; the pistols of sire, and son were at length leveled at each other's breast. But, my satisfaction was not without alloy. I knew him to be perilously skilled in the use of his weapon; and was sensible that if I failed to wound him mortally by my first fire, all my hopes of vengeance were finally frustrated; for, I was well assured that he would hit, and either kill, or utterly incapacitate me.

For some moments, we remained stationarily, in this deadly opposition: then, according to the forms we had arranged, slowly and mutually approached; eye intently riveted upon eye, and each glaring into

the countenance of the other, watching every, the minutest, motion, with a vigilance, an avidity of scrutiny, which only our fell passions, and our relative positions, could have inspired. Both equally knew the importance attached to the act of firing first; both equally felt its advantages, and disadvantages; for, if the bullet of either should miss its object, the other was left utterly at the mercy of his adversary; who, no longer being himself exposed to the risk, or disturbed by the sense, of any personal peril, might then take his aim as deliberately, and steadily, as though its object were a target. Each was aware of this danger; and consequently entertained an almost equal reluctance to discharge his weapon.

But, at last, my antipathy being the stronger, my patience was the first to fail. Making a preternatural effort to steady my hand, I summoned all my energies, and slightly shifted the level of my pistol. My father's quick eye instantly discovered this change.

"By heaven," he exclaimed, "I believe the sanguinary knave is really attempting to take my life!"

How could he have doubted my intention!—Scarcely had his words concluded when I pulled the trigger; the bullet sped; but, it was not laden with death: it had however wounded him. He raised his hand to his temple: and withdrew it covered with blood. Instantly his countenance assumed the grim, ghastly expression it had worn, in the memorable moment when he had ruthlessly robbed me of a hand. Fire flashed from his eyes; and his face was swoln beneath the fierce tempest of his sanguinary wrath.

"Hell-hound!" he cried, "accursed miscreant. have I not solemnly warned you that earth contains not the weapon with which you shall ever injure me? Fool! I tell you again, you may as well assail a mountain rock, as raise your sorry arm against my life. Worm! I laugh at, scorn, defy your puny, fruitless efforts! But you have displayed a murderous, though an impotent malice; and now, therefore," he added pointing to his bleeding temple, "receive a parent's reward for this filial proof of your black heart, and unskilful hand!"

He raised the pistol; and leveled it at me but too accurately. In the next moment, however he lowered it; and again the whole expression of his countenance rapidly changed.

"No," he said, "*instant* death were far too slight a punishment for such iniquities as yours; you shall therefore, previously enjoy some of the sweets of apprehension."

Again he aimed his weapon at me.

"We will now," he continued, "resume our advance; and, in the moment wherein we arrive at the extreme verge of our boundary, you shall receive the degree of retribution you merit."

Slowly we re-commenced our mutual approach; all the while, the deadly implement leveled so accurately at my head, that I could almost discern the termination of the interior of its infernal barrel. I felt that my life was in the power of an evil, and remorseless man; and I experienced a transitory impulse to attempt to preserve myself by flight. Not, that in that

moment, I dreaded death; in the wild excitement of feeling which I then possessed, I disdained it, laughed at it; but, I *did* dread with an agony that is ineffable, the anticipated loss of my revenge. Strong, however, as was my desire to reserve myself for the chance of some future hour of retribution; despite too, of the morally enervating influence of the evil sentiments I had so long entertained, that invincible delusion, which is denominated *worldly honour*, still retained so firm a hold upon me, still clung so tenaciously to the ruins of my heart, that I continued doggedly fixed to my path; though I knew that I adhered to it, in defiance of the certainty of being butchered.

At length, we arrived at the boundary of our career; then, my father said,

"What I have once before told you, I now repeat; death is too mild a punishment for you: you shall therefore, live yet a little longer to enjoy the pleasures of an approving conscience. But, do not think that your body shall escape scathless; hope it not, my ruthless son: for every aggression upon me, I will ever have a limb in atonement. Continue, then, your hostility, if it please you; we will see which will the sooner tire, you, of assaulting, or I, of bereaving; for, by all the blood-thirsty feelings which you have engendered in me, I swear, that I will lop you, branch by branch, until no more than a mere trunk remains; with, to use your own foul expressions, as little thought of mercy, as little sense of remorse, as though I were one of the rabblement in the forest, hacking the worthless timber of a blasted oak!"

He paused for a moment, evidently seeking to check the growth of his returning ire; and then, added more passively,

"Take good heed therefore, that the next time you attempt my destruction you succeed; or, you shall live to rue bitterly your bungling malice. And now, to treat you as the Spartans treated their children; punish you not for your misdeed, but, for its failure. I cannot label my bullet, as Aster did his arrow; and therefore, in a sorry emulation of his dexterity, I will orally acquaint you, that, it bears from me, a stern and retributive message to *the bone of my son's left arm, beneath the shoulder joint.*"

He pulled the trigger; and too accurately did the accursed implement of his foul cruelty, fulfil his sanguinary intention. My arm was shattered; and hung uselessly by my side. For a moment I gazed piteously, and in dismay, upon this additional mutilation of the fated limb; then, turned my looks upon the calm, cold, grimly exulting countenance of my relentless foe. Instantly, my mind received a new impulse. Suffering the pistol which I still retained in my right hand, to slip quickly in my grasp, I at last firmly seized it by the end of the barrel; and raising the heavy handle in the air, rushed wolfishly upon my implacable parent, exclaiming,

"And this, is Philip's vengeance!"

But, he intercepted the murderous blow which I aimed at him; and dealt me with his own weapon, so fierce a stroke, that I was instantly stretched senselessly on the earth.

When I returned to the possession of my faculties, I found myself in my own chamber, on the very bed which had once before been drenched in my blood. It was still mid-day; the rays of the sun descended almost perpendicularly through the casement. I gazed around me: and slowly arranged my thoughts. A rough bandage had been secured upon my wounded arm, which lay numbly, and uselessly, but not painfully at my side. A domestic was in the room; I invented some mission which procured for me, his absence. The instant, the door closed upon him, I arose, and descending from my couch, advanced slowly, and feebly towards the armory.

At last, I entered the well remembered apartment; where, in its wonted place, lay the formidable axe which had robbed me of a hand. I examined the edge; it possessed all its former keenness; but, the brilliancy of the blade was destroyed by the traces of my blood. Raising this deadly weapon, and supporting it, upon my shoulder, I resumed my course.

I approached my father's chamber; not a sound met my ear. The door was only partially closed; I opened it gently, and beheld him sitting with his back towards me. I entered; and, after a few stealthy paces, discerned that he was asleep. In the next moment, I stood by his side. As he slumbered beneath me, I looked down upon him with feelings of exultation which I dare not attempt to portray. I raised the keen axe above his head: yet, I hesitated to strike: I had not sated myself with the consciousness of possessing the power of vengeance. But, the duration

of this fiend-like gratification was curtailed by the apprehension of his awaking; or of any other accident which might baffle my revenge even in the very moment of its apparent fulfilment.

"Then, now," I thought, "to strike for the attainment of that vengeance, which would be perfect, save for the knowledge that he has but one life wherewith to sate it!"

I raised the deadly weapon still higher: in the next moment, impelled by all the fell energy that still remained to me, the trenchant blade descended; and my victim passed instantly from the sleep of life, into that, of death.

The butchery was done: the struggle was concluded: the ceaseless thought, the all absorbing project, at once the cherished hope and the prime terror of the chief portion of my existence, which had been alternately fostered and discouraged, loathed and beloved, was at last fulfilled! My oppressor was slaughtered, the work of carnage was completed; and *I* was avenged: the tongue that had scoffed me was silent, and the hand that had maimed me was still for evermore.

"I have obeyed you," I said huskily, and hissingly between my clenched teeth; "I have adopted your own counsel; and, like the Spartan child, I shall not *now*, be punished for my *failure*."

Again I gazed intently on the senseless body; and then, I repeated, with a hellish exultation, the very words which once he had addressed to me, in *his* hour of sanguinary triumph:

"But you do not deign to reply? You are as mute to me, as was the concubine,—'who was fallen down at the door of the house, and whose hands were on the threshold,'—to her master. Yet, now, I say to you, in the Levite's words, 'Up! and let us be going!'"

For an instant, I paused that I might glory in the silence which followed this bitter burst of diabolical exultation; then, I added emphatically with a heart-glowing thrill of ferocious rapture,

"But, *none answered!*"

I resumed my tacit contemplation of the deed I had wrought; yet, such was the immortal nature of my fiend-like wrath, that, even the bloody spectacle before me, and the conciousness of being its author, could not wholly glut it. A sense of thirst, an unappeased mysterious craving, were still within me; I looked, and looked, and looked, but could not sate them: ghastly as was the object that met my glaring eye, it seemed scarcely an equivalent for the wrongs I had sustained: with every faculty of my being I strove to drink it all; but still, I felt that it did not thoroughly slake the fiery fever of my arid heart.

How long a period might have elapsed, ere I should have spontaneously abandoned the gaze and the reflections which were instigated by exhaustless malice, remorseless hatred, and the sense of injuries irremediable, I know not; for, an accident abruptly terminated them.

The surface of the floor of the apartment was extremely unequal; and beneath the chair on which my father's body still remained, was a considerable inden-

tation, wherein the life-blood poured, and accumulated, until a large pool was formed. Suddenly it overflowed; and I observed hurrying towards me, a quick, and winding stream of the dark, sanguine fluid. I started from its path, as though I had discovered a tiger in the act of springing upon me!

I advanced to the door, locked it, and retained the key. Then, hastening from the room, I descended to one of those outer buildings, where I had left the servants who had accompanied me, on my journey. The child of one of the domestics intercepted my passage. It tottered towards me; and, catching me by my garment, for an instant impeded my progress, as looking up into my face, with a countenance beaming with the confidence, happiness, and innocence of its age, it said,

"Where is my father—I want my father—Have you a father?"

I pushed the brat rudely aside: but, I never forgot these words! I then summoned my attendants, and left the mansion. A pursuit after me, was subsequently commenced. Nevertheless in spite of my wound, by the power of gold, I succeeded in baffling it, and finally, in escaping to a foreign land: nor did I ever again return to my own.

THE END OF THE PARRICIDE'S MEMOIR.

MANY years had elapsed since the occurrence of the concluding event of the Parricide's tragical and remarkable narration; when, during an early hour on a fine summer's morn, a stranger costly appareled, and accompanied by two mounted domestics, galloped violently, into a frontier town. As he advanced through its streets, he was compelled to diminish his pace; for, though the sun had but just risen, many of the inhabitants were already abroad. All were hurrying in one common direction; and their countenances, and the words which occasionally fell from them, equally denoted that they were assembled by some cause of general, and anxious interest.

One of the stranger's attendants, loitering for a moment in the rear, demanded of an individual in the crowd, the cause of this commotion.

"We are proceeding," replied the man, "to witness the punishment of the wheel, inflicted on a Parricide."

The attendant then resumed his place by the side of his companion. As they continued to advance, the throng increased. At last, they arrived in the large open space which was selected for the execution; and where all the preparations for it had been already completed. The stranger stationed himself in the immediate vicinity of the track by which, he was told, the criminal must pass to the scaffold. He then addressed various questions to the by-standers; and thus learned several singular particulars relative to

the wretched being who was sentenced to undergo this most terrific expiation of his crimes.

Many, very many years had elapsed since the commission of the murder; and though the assassin was generally supposed to be known, his capture might never have occurred, had he not spontaneously delivered himself into the hands of justice. As however, he was a foreigner, and the parricide was perpetrated in another country, the proofs too of his guilt being difficult of acquisition, even if they could be acquired at all, after several examinations, the authorities would have emancipated him, if he would have retracted his self-inculpation. Yet, he not only resolutely maintained it, but, volunteered to procure at his own charge, from his own land, indisputable evidence of its truth. When questioned why he did not resign himself to the retribution of the laws of his native place, his answer was remarkable. He stated that the penal code of his own country comprised but two modes of execution, hanging, and decollation; and *he desired to perish on the wheel:* the reward assigned by almost every other nation, to the perpetrator of that most unnatural and heinous of offences, Parricide. Subsequently, to this singular declaration, he had not only secured sufficient proofs of his guilt, but, had obtained from his own government, its concurrence in his sentence, and in his unwonted, and terrible species of punition.

These strange particulars, which were widely known, had excited an extent of interest in the fate of this extraordinary criminal, that was unparalleled: and consequently, not only the entire male population of

the town had assembled, but many residents of the surrounding district, and strangers from more distant parts, had arrived to witness his fearful death.

The individual who had elicited this singular detail, listened to it with evident and intense anxiety and pain. He then asked whether they could acquaint him with the name of the murderer. The reply was, that he was unknown; but, many supposed that he had once possessed both station and rank in his own land.

In a short time, after the conclusion of this conversation, the melancholy procession commenced; and, at last, the malefactor himself advanced into sight, followed by two executioners; one of whom bore upon his shoulder, a large and heavy bar of iron. The usual intense silence which accompanies, even in the most turbulent rabble, the entertainment of any powerful emotion, instantly ensued. Two dense, and seemingly endless lines of pallid countenances indicated both the spectators' own feelings, and the general and terrific interest of the scene; and every eye was strainingly bent upon the chief actor in that savage tragedy, which, pandering at once, to some of the weakest and many of the worst feelings in the human heart, had first attracted, and now threatened to compel the spell-bound presence of the stupid and half-affrighted, yet still half-ferocious and blood-thirsty multitude.

The object of all this barbarous, almost *ferine*, interest, was a tall, emaciated man; who, in spite of his broken and decrepit frame, had once probably been both vigorous, and comely. His eyes were sunken

and a death-like ghastliness was on his features; a tangled mass of thick grizzled hair partially shaded a forehead on which were several scars; and his general aspect contained that fierceness, wildness, and gloom which are considered characteristic of insanity. He did not walk firmly; but, his unsteadiness arose evidently in no moral apprehension, but in physical debility.

He passed close to the stranger; who appeared inclined to address him. Once, with a violent effort, he did succeed in uttering some few hesitating words; but, they were too impeded, and confused, to be audible to the criminal, who silently and unconsciously continued his path. As he approached the scaffold, and the fearful wheel became manifest to him, he evidently strove to summon all his bodily energies to his aid. From that moment, his paces were more steady; but, the struggle by which he effected this change, seemed to be the last desperate endeavour of a man who was sensibly dying.

He stepped upon the scaffold; and gazed upon the infernal altar of his coming torture, without any indication of emotion. A catholic priest presented to him the cross, and proposed to assist him with spiritual consolation: but, he declined the offer coldly, though not repulsively; as also, the permission of addressing the multitude. He merely stated to those that stood around him, that he perished a guilty man; and that he wished all to understand that he was conscious he was only doomed to incur the just, and desired reward of his crimes.

Having been deprived of his apparel, a linen cloth was tied around his loins; then, he was placed upon the wheel, and securely fettered to it. During all this lingering process, this fearful prelude to the final and horrific strife of mind and matter, of the strength of the spirit, and the weakness of the physical man, the criminal still retained a calm, and resolute aspect; and fixed a steady gaze upon the executioner, wherein mingled no trace of apprehension.

The signal, which was to authorize the commencement of the slow and abhorrent destruction of a human life, was then given; and the grisly and callous ruffian, who was to inflict the atrocious sentence of hellish but legitimated cruelty, raising his ponderous bar, impelled it with all his brute energy upon the upper bone of the wretched victim's only remaining arm. It yielded a dull, and heavy sound; and was literally crushed beneath the blow. Nevertheless, no shriek, or even groan broke from the sufferer. Those who were near him might have seen the big drops of his mortal agony gush from his forehead; but the keenest eye could have detected no other indication of the torture he endured.

Three more blows fell; one, upon the lower bone of the arm; and the others, upon the two bones of the leg. Twice more, the accursed weapon descended; and his last limb was shattered, and mangled, like its fellows. Then, the voice of the sufferer was heard.

"My destiny is fulfilled!" he faintly said: and added, with more vigour, "Lying fiend! I have defeated you!—I die fearlessly—I have *not* blenched."

Again the executioner raised his arm; and this time, he dealt the *coup de grace.* But, it was useless: the wretched culprit was already dead.

The crowd dispersed; gloomy, depressed, and at once, tortured, glutted, and delighted by that species of horror, which arises in the contemplation of the mortal agony of a fellow being: an emotion incomparably dear to vulgar minds.

But, the stranger was of another mould; he had quitted the town, before the cruel immolation had commenced; leaving behind him one of his domestics to gather the particulars. Without the gates, he awaited this man's arrival; and the moment it occurred, he resumed his journey. All day, he rode without relaxing his speed; and, in the evening arrived at the magnificent edifice which owned him for its lord.

Into a chamber he hastened, wherein were several inmates. One of them was a lady who had passed the prime of life; but, her features still indicated that she had been beautiful. The second was in the very zenith of her personal attractions; and was a lovely and graceful dame. Two children were their companions; the elder of which was perhaps about ten years old; and its sister somewhat less. Both the ladies were clothed in black; and their countenances expressed gloom and anxiety.

The younger lady threw herself into the arms of the stranger, when he entered the apartment; and they tenderly embraced. For a moment, neither spoke; at length, she said,

"Are our suspicions true?"

"Dear Marion," he replied, "I fear that they are."

Again there was a sad and solemn pause; and then, the stranger recounted several particulars relative to the criminal whose execution has just been described. However, he did not communicate the mode of his punishment; and his auditors were evidently ignorant that he had undergone so merciless a death.

"Yes, Œnone," said Marion, turning to her companion, "yes, it must be he. His speech alone would prove it. During our long residence together on the shores of the Mediterranean, scarcely a day elapsed that I did not hear him, either during his siesta, or during his intense, and frequent fits of abstraction, allude to some fiend whom he supposed to be pursuing him. Unhappy being! even at that time, he experienced occasional aberrations of intellect. What extent of insanity then, must not his subsequent crimes and sufferings have entailed upon him!"

The countenance of her, she called Œnone, exhibited an expression of speechless grief and horror. She made no attempt to reply; seeming both incapable, and conscious of her incapacity.

"Alas! alas! my brother," resumed Marion, "what wretchedness have you again brought upon your ill-fated sister!—But, for you, my husband," she added, turning to the stranger, "you, my children, and you, Œnone, you, alike the witnesses, and the causes of it, I should now once more believe my recent happiness, a dream."

Her husband fondly attempted to console her; then said——

"For your brother's own sake, you should cease to regret his death. From that strange record of his life, which though it reached us anonymously, I feel assured that he alone could have sent to us, none can fail to infer that he was, and ever must have been, utterly, inexpressibly wretched. Nature seems to have combined in him, all those discrepant, and incongruous qualities, which are most sure to entail upon their possessor unmitigated misery. What a melancholy, what a terrific, yet what an instructive picture of the consequences of self-indulgence does his stormy narrative reveal!"

Œnone, who had somewhat withdrawn, now advanced, and said, with great emotion;

"The present, is the first time, during many years, that this unhappy theme has been recurred to by us—let me now implore you to suffer it to be the *last!*"

"So, be it," rejoined Marion, with equal fervour, and almost equal pathos; "for the sake of my own peace, I will strive to forget that I ever had either father, or brother!"

Her husband tenderly embraced her; then, turning to her cousin, said,

"You were a bright example to him, Œnone; you were both exposed to the same ordeal, yet, in that crisis of your lives, *you* obeyed the dictates of your duty, *he* abandoned himself to the impulses of his passion. You may have been slightly scathed by the struggle you then endured, you may not have escaped

wholly without a scar, but, your course has, at least, secured for you, serenity and self-satisfaction: while the thorny path he then entered, has gradually conducted him from outrage to outrage, from tempest to tempest, through endless misery and remorse, to ultimately, a father's murder, and a felon's death."

THE END.

NOTE.

Page 188, line 9.

As Aster did his arrow.

Though unwilling to imply a disrespect to his reader's erudition by the introduction of notes, yet as a recollection of the anecdote to which the above and an ensuing passage refers is essentially necessary to their comprehension, the author transcribes it:

During the siege of Methone by Philip of Macedon, Aster, an archer, shot an arrow from the walls, bearing on it, the inscription, *To Philip's right eye*, which accurately fulfilled its errand. To this fatally convincing proof of his enemy's skill, the monarch replied in a similar spirit, by returning the same arrow with a label appended to it, on which was written, *If Philip takes the town he will hang Aster.*—The town *was* taken; and the victor fulfilled his threat.

There may be one or two other historic allusions in these pages: if therefore, the reader should ever chance to have forgotten the themes upon which they are founded, the author hopes that his foregoing remark will be accepted as a just plea for the omission of any additional citations.